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Local pg 4

Q&A with Premier Darrell Dexter



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HALIFAX • TU CEMBER 22, 2009 metronews.ca

Sports pg 22

Rainmen keep up strong pre-season play



Intersection project finally complete

SEWER LINE Traffic headaches caused by months of work at a busy south-end Halifax intersection are finally over.

The Halifax Water Commission announced yesterday work on a water and sewer replacement project that involved the intersection of South and South Park streets is complete, with only paving and landscaping left to do.

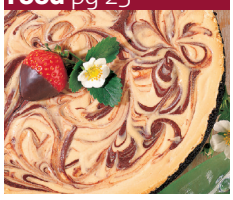
Replacement of the Freshwater Brook sewer line had been on-going since August of 2008, with this Phase 3 portion in the works since the spring.

METRO HALIFAX

News on the Move

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Food pg 25



Decadence in desserts

On the web
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Snow **Flight**



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Thomas Gwynne-Timothy and his younger brother Kenneth, 6, hit a jump as they slide down the hill at Gorsebrook Park yesterday. Many kids in the HRM were happy to see fresh snow on the first official day of winter — but meteorologists warn it may not last till Christmas. More coverage, page 3

Bus along waterfront?

Metro Transit to propose route

MONIQUE MUISE
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A new bus route along the Halifax waterfront may be up and running by next summer.

A proposal for the new route — to be the No. 8 — will be brought before Halifax Regional Council early in the new year, said Metro Transit spokesperson Lori Patterson.

The proposed service would run every 30 minutes along Lower Water Street, making stops at Scotia Square, NSCAD's waterfront campus and Pier 21.

"With the development that's now taking place along the waterfront, we've seen that we need to do something there," Patterson explained.

That development includes new offices for Nova Scotia Power, slated to open in 2011, as well as the ever-expanding tourist mecca surrounding Pier 21.

Plans for a free downtown shuttle that would run much more frequently and serve a broader area had been in the works for some time, but was noticeably absent from the five-year transit plan presented to council in October.

Paul MacKinnon, executive director of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, said the proposed route is "a step in the right direction," but the free shuttle should remain a priority.

"Where we differ from (Metro Transit) is that they feel the changes to the number one route and this new No. 8 bus will accomplish all the things a downtown shuttle could ... but we don't see it that way," MacKinnon said. "We haven't given up yet."

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Historic Charles Morris Building makes first of new moves

After 240 years on Hollis Street, one of Halifax's oldest buildings greeted the sun from a brand new home this morning.

The Charles Morris Building, built in 1760, has been lifted off its foundations and was scheduled to be moved last night to a parking lot on Morris Street owned by Nova Scotia Power.

The building had been destined for a landfill after a developer purchased the land where it stood and announced plans to build on the site.

The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and several other organizations stepped in to save the historic structure, and four HRM councillors provided funding for the move.

The building was named for its original owner, Charles Morris, who served as the province's first chief surveyor and laid out the original streets and property lines for the city of Halifax.

The building will remain on Morris Street until the Heritage Trust decides where it should eventually end up.

METRO HALIFAX



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Local



Dancing into town

The So You Think You Can Dance Canada Top 10 finalists tour is coming to the Halifax Metro Centre tonight at 7:30 p.m. The event features Amy, Austin, Cody, Emanuel, Everett, Jayme Rae, Kim, Melanie, Tara-Jean and Vincent and is part of an 18-city cross-Canada tour. Tickets range in price from $47 to $67 and are available at all Ticket Atlantic Box Office outlets, online at ticketatlantic.com or by phone at 451-1221. METRO HALIFAX

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

Woman, 19, hurt after being hit by pickup truck

COLLISION Halifax Regional Police say a 19-year-old woman was struck by a pickup truck at the intersection of Upper Water and Barrington streets yesterday afternoon.

Police say the incident took place at 1:05 p.m. The victim was transported to the QEII Health Sciences Centre with non-life threatening injuries.

The 35-year-old male driver wasn't injured. The accident is under investigation. METRO HALIFAX

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

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A warm Christmas in HRM

PHILIP CROUCHER
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Dreaming of a white Christmas? You might be out of luck.

Although HRM residents awoke yesterday to find a blanket of between 10 and 15 centimetres of snow on the ground, it doesn't look like much of the white stuff will stick around for when Jolly Ol' St. Nicholas arrives on Friday.

That's because showers are forecasted today and tomorrow, and Christmas Eve Thursday is calling for sun and clouds with seasonable temperatures.

"It's possible some of it might still be around," Cindy Vallis, an Environment Canada meteorologist based in Dartmouth, said yesterday. "Accumulations don't look too high as far as rainfall amounts go, but there are going to be a few showers around and temperatures are going to be a bit milder than what we've been seeing."

Vallis said Sunday's storm resulted in 10.4 centimetres of snow for Halifax International Airport and 14 cm at Shearwater. That's below the between 15 and 25 cm predicted before the storm's arrival.

"We may have gotten off a little easy, but there was a fair bit of blowing snow around at times," Vallis explained.

Right now, travel for Christmas Day and Boxing Day looks good. Christmas Day is calling for sunny skies and temperatures around 3C.

Boxing Day Saturday has showers in the forecast and a high of 5 C.

"Rain is expected right now on Sunday, but I would take that rain with a grain of salt," Vallis added with a laugh.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Tiffany Gardner shovels the sidewalk in front of her home on St. Margaret's Bay Road. With showers popping up in the weather forecast, it may not be a white Christmas this year.

Safe winter driving

- HRM Partners in Policing are reminding drivers to prepare their vehicle for winter conditions. Tips include having your tires and wiper blades in good condition and windshield washer fluid full. Also recommended is an emergency kit consisting of a blanket, matches, candle, plastic garbage bag, flashlight, batteries, extra clothing and a flash flag.

N.S. scientist's Nobel Prize a mistake, ex-colleagues say

SCIENCE Former colleagues of a Nova Scotian physicist who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize say the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has made a big mistake.

Earlier this month, the academy cited Willard Boyle, who currently lives in Halifax, and American George Smith for inventing an image sensor that revolutionized photography. But two of their former co-workers at Bell Labs in New Jersey — Eugene Gordon and Mike Tompsett — say the citation is wrong.



Willard Boyle

"They wouldn't know an imaging device if it stared them in the face," Gordon, 79, said in an interview yesterday.

Gordon, who worked at Bell Labs for 26 years, said the patent used to justify the award makes no mention of imaging devices, even though the academy said the invention of the charge-coupled device or CCD in 1969 led to the birth of digital photography.

The CCD transforms light into a large number of digitized image points, or pixels, in a split second. The technology is still in use today.

But Gordon said Boyle and Smith had little to do with the scientific breakthrough, a claim the Nobel Prize winners flatly dismiss. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Men arrested after thousands of illegal cigarettes found

CHARGES Two men have been arrested for allegedly being in possession of tens of thousands of contraband cigarettes in Middleton.

The RCMP Integrated Border Enforcement Team says it seized 85,000 contraband cigarettes, two vehicles and cash.

Police say the two men were arrested on Friday for possession of unstamped tobacco products. A 41-year-old man from Middleton and a 61-year-old man from Bridgetown have been released under a promise to appear in court on Feb. 23. METRO HALIFAX

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Three seriously injured after vehicle collision on Highway 101

Three people suffered life-threatening injuries in a head-on collision on Highway 101 near Kentville yesterday. Two cars collided just west of Exit 12 at about 4:15 p.m. RCMP closed the highway between New Minas and Coldbrook for several hours. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dexter reflects on the decade that was

Premier on Copenhagen, deficit, real-time tech and other news that made headlines

PAUL McLEOD
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You could say Darrell Dexter had an OK decade.

From winning the NDP leadership to becoming premier of a majority government, he's a long way from his one-time after-high school job of digging trenches.

Then again, there have been better times to be premier of Nova Scotia. Hundreds of millions of deficit dollars, flat-lining revenues and rising costs tend to take the wind out of one's sails.

Metro sat down with Dexter yesterday to discuss some of the big issues and cultural quirks of the last year — and decade.

Some answers have been edited for length.

Q Between 9-11, Hurricane Katrina, wars, tsunamis, the economic collapse, etc., a lot of people think it's been a pretty rotten decade. How do you think history is going to size up the aughts?

A Well, that's a good question. It certainly has been a tumultuous decade ... I think there was this sense that there was an economic wave without end. Of course, we found out in October of '08 ... the economic underpinnings of the financial system were not sustainable. I would think that given it's the most severe economic correction since the Great Depression, that if anything comes out of this decade, that will likely be remembered. I mean, you saw right-wing governments stepping in to nationalize banks. That's unheard of.

Q You just got back from Copenhagen. A lot of environmental advocates are not happy with the final result. Was the summit a success or a failure?

A It was frustrating to get up every day and see that the focus seemed to be on China and the United States, when what we saw on the ground was a high level of agreement on the road forward, particularly among the sub-nationals, among the provincial and regional governments who were saying it doesn't really matter what the nationals decide, because we are charged with the responsibility of implementing 50 to 80 per cent of the mitigation and adaption strategies anyway ... From my perspective, I wish there could have been a more universally adopted solution at the national level, but I think that there were lots of positive things that happened in Copenhagen.

Q You've already announced you will have to go back on your election promise to balance next year's budget. Was it ever responsible to promise that and insist it was possible?

"I think that next year's going to be a tougher year than this year. Financial decisions relating to the budget are not going to be easy ... We can't continue to be in the subsidy business for commercial enterprise." Premier Darrell Dexter

A You do everything you do based on the information you have at the time. As (economist) Tim O'Neill pointed out, you had professional economists that didn't anticipate the unsustainable financial path that Nova Scotia was on. We knew there was going to be a gap that the former government had papered over. We certainly had no idea that gap was going to be in the vicinity of $1.2 billion, and I don't think anybody did.

Q With unions looking for raises and the province in deep deficit, is 2010 going to be another rough year?

A I think that next year's going to be a tougher year than this year. Financial decisions relating to the budget are not going to be easy .. The Cat is an example, Starlink was another one. We can't continue to be in the subsidy business for commercial enterprise.

Q The media landscape has shrunk significantly over the last decade. As a politician and former journalist yourself, what do you think the impact has been?

A There are limitations in the press corps these days. I think there is a real crisis in media. The so-called convergence model took a lot of people out of the world of journalism who added great value to the debate. I think we're suffering because of it.

Q Over the last decade, things like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace exploded onto the scene. Did you get sucked into the social media vortex?

A I don't have Facebook, I've never twittered, or tweeted, or whatever they call it.

Q Which was more annoying this decade: Reality TV or emo music?

A Boy, do you have to choose? Because they're both pretty annoying.

Q Right now, the hottest thing going is Twilight. Any predictions on the next big fad?

A I haven't seen any of the Twilight movies, so I don't know. This is the vampire youth teen love stories, is that what they are? No, I don't really know.

Q With non-stop texting and always being plugged in, do you think we've become too addicted to technology?

A Everything happens in real time now ... When you (hold a press conference), somebody is with the other leader and they're texting back and forth. So all of the sudden it's become a real-time world — instead of day by day or hour by hour, it's literally minute by minute.

Q This year, Liberals accused Conservative MP Rick Dykstra of texting during a Remembrance Day ceremony. Dykstra said he was only live-blogging the ceremony. Have we become addicted to technology to the point of absurdity?

A I think so. I have a BlackBerry, I obviously have to use it for business, but I find it really overwhelming. One of the best experiences I had happened last February when I travelled to Panama ... The phone didn't work, the BlackBerry didn't work. It was like a godsend ... It was just great and refreshing to be away from the white noise, which is constant communication.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Premier Darrell Dexter speaks with Metro Halifax at his One Government Place office yesterday.

4095166

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British broadcasting great to address East Coast music audience

The East Coast Music Association announced yesterday that Bob Harris, a British contemporary music broadcasting great from BBC Radio 2, is giving the keynote address at the 2010 Awards, Festival & Conference March 4 to 7 in Sydney. Harris will address the audience March 6, at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. METRO HALIFAX

Don't count on Cat: Dexter

Report may recommend new Yarmouth ferry, premier says

PAUL MCLEOD
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There could still be a Yarmouth-to-Maine ferry but it likely won't be the Cat, Premier Darrell Dexter said yesterday.

In an interview with Metro Halifax, the premier said despite what may come, the Bay Ferries operation had become unworkable.

"Last year it was $12 million (in subsidies to keep the ferry operational). The province just cannot sustain that," he said.

"The job of government is not to continue to subsidize services that are not meeting the needs of the province or the region."

Bay Ferries said last week it will shut down the seasonal ferry after being denied $6 million in government subsidies. The area will lose 120 jobs.

A joint federal-provincial report on transportation in the area is underway. Dexter said it may recommend a new ferry service, but his best bet is it won't be the Cat.



TINA COMEAU/YARMOUTH VANGUARD

The Cat ferry makes its approach to Yarmouth harbour in this file photo. It was announced last week that the ferry between Nova Scotia and Maine is no longer running.

Dexter said one key problem with Bay Ferries' operation is that it was purely for passenger traffic and had no commercial capacity. He said whatever ferry service exists should fill the exporting needs of Southwest Nova.

"I think that moving this decision back to the communities is the important thing to do," Dexter said. "To say you have to find a ferry service operator that is sustainable, that will provide you with the export capacity that you need and will provide you with a passenger service."

Yarmouth Mayor Phil Mooney will be part of a delegation to Halifax tomorrow to lobby Dexter to save the existing ferry service.

Mooney said he's received calls from tourism operators from Nova Scotia and the state of Maine who say they will suffer if ferry service isn't restored.

The town of Yarmouth has opened an office and assigned a town employee as part of its own ferry-rescue plan.

Senior loses $10K in phone scam: RCMP

CRIME Nova Scotia RCMP say two men trying out a new telephone fraud scam managed to swindle an elderly Amherst area woman out of $10,000 over the weekend.

Nova Scotia RCMP say the woman received a call on Sunday from a man claiming to be her grandson. The man told her he had been arrested and needed money to be released from jail before handing the phone over to another man, who claimed to be a lawyer, police allege.

The woman ended up sending close to $10,000 in the form of a Canada Post money order to a specific location to have the man released from jail.

Last week, RCMP sent out warnings about this scam after various other people got similar calls. Police are advising anyone who gets such a call to contact the anti-fraud centre at 1-888-495-8501.

METRO HALIFAX

Runner raises thousands for HIV/AIDS support programs

INITIATIVE A Cape Breton woman has finished 14 half-marathons in 14 consecutive days to raise money for HIV/AIDS support programs in Africa.

Deby Johnston, 54, of Ingonish Ferry spent two weeks running the Cabot Trail as part of the Stephen Lewis Foundation initiative, A Dare to Remember.

Johnston began her journey Dec. 1 — World AIDS Day — and ran each day for approximately 21.1 kilometres after working her regular job with Nova Scotia Power.

"It went fabulous," an enthusiastic Johnston said. "I finished in the 14 days — I didn't miss one day. I ran through three snowstorms and I felt great."

Johnston has raised upwards of $11,000 for the Stephen Lewis Foundation and is continuing to accept donations through the foundation's website.

CAPE BRETON POST

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Solider to be tried for murder in court martial

A Canadian officer charged in the death of a wounded Afghan insurgent will face a court martial next month. The military announced yesterday that Capt. Robert Semrau's trial will begin Jan. 25 in Gatineau, Que. Semrau is charged with second-degree murder for the 2008 shooting death. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada



No ethics violation: Watchdog

Conservative Senator Leo Housakos, left, did not break any ethics rules while working within an engineering firm that landed a federal stimulus contract, a Senate watchdog said yesterday. The Canadian Press reported this fall that Housakos was on the payroll of Groupe BPR Inc. last September when it was awarded $4.5 million as part of a consortium studying the aging Champlain Bridge. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charity **Never too young to give**



SEAN KOLENKO/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Tru Smit, 3, donates to the Salvation Army as volunteer Pat Haram watches yesterday morning at Pacific Centre in Vancouver. Smit was at the mall with her dad. Many charities across Canada say donations have been slow this holiday season.

Games a boon to gangs

Relatively calm Olympics expected, Vancouver officials say

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

When Vancouver police officers answered a 911 call this month and stumbled across thousands of ecstasy tablets imprinted with the Olympic rings, they may have also discovered reason to believe the region that saw bullets flying in an all-out gang war earlier this year will see relative calm come Games time.

Just like the province is counting on the Winter Games to inject billions of dollars into the B.C. economy, organized criminals are hoping to cash in.

"I think there is so much money to be made from the Olympics that it's highly likely that there won't be much disturbance," said Robert Gordon, the director of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University.

That certainly wasn't the case last February, when the body count was climbing and petrified Vancouver region residents were demanding police and politicians act.

135 The province's Integrated Gang Task Force estimates there are about 135 gangs in B.C. — a group of three or more people committing serious offences.

The latest round of bloodshed began in January, continuing for months, and at the peak of what police later admitted was an all-out gang war, people "known to police" were dying on a daily basis.

A frightening picture of murder and revenge was playing out in daily police briefings and before February was done, there had been 16 shootings and nine people were dead, including a 23-year-old mother found slumped over the wheel of a new Cadillac with her four-year-old son still strapped into his car seat in the back.

But the beginning of the end of the violence came in April, as police rounded up members of several prominent gangs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Aid groups worried about funding

ORGANIZATIONS The Harper government's decision to axe funding for a Christian aid organization has cast a pall over foreign aid groups who fear they'll be cut off and their reputations smeared if they dare to contradict Conservative policy.

Those groups that are involved in aid work in the Middle East are particularly fearful, given that the government appears to have expanded the definition of anti-Semitism to include any criticism of Israel.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pair of Ontario court cases might re-write libel laws

LEGAL The country's top court is set to rule today on two landmark cases that could re-write the rules on libel in Canada and grant journalists broader protections against lawsuits.

The Supreme Court of Canada has been urged by media outlets across the country to establish a new "responsible journalism" defence that would shield reporters who publish "in the public interest" and follow professional standards in their reporting, even if the truth of their stories cannot be proven.

"What's at stake is the modernization of freedom of the press." Paul Schabas, Toronto Star lawyer

At the heart of it all is a pair of judgments to be released this morning in two Ontario cases.

One involves reporting by the Toronto Star on a contentious application in northern Ontario by developer Peter Grant, a friend and supporter of former premier Mike Harris, to expand a golf course on cottage lakeside property.

The other involves articles by the Ottawa Citizen about Kanata OPP police officer Danno Cusson who travelled with his pet dog Ranger to Ground Zero after the 9-11 attacks to look for survivors.

"What's at stake is the modernization of freedom of the press and whether libel laws will be adapted to comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms" and how the law has developed elsewhere, Toronto Star lawyer Paul Schabas said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

ACCIDENT Police and safety officers are investigating the death of a man who fell to the ground while de-icing a plane at Calgary International Airport. Calgary Police Insp. Rob Williams said the man, in his early 50s, fell about six metres from the bucket of a de-icing truck at around 6 a.m. on Monday. There was light snow falling at the time, but it is not clear if that was a factor in his accident. THE CANADIAN PRESS

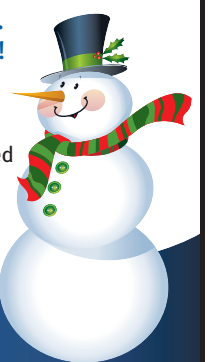
m.metronews.ca

ScanLife

Same-sex marriage pioneers are among Canadians who were headline one-hit-wonders in the 2000's. Scan this barcode for the full story or go to metronews.ca/canada

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Glucose test not helping all: Study

DIABETES Ontario and other provinces could save tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars by cutting back on the number of unnecessary glucose tests conducted weekly by people 65 and older who have Type 2 diabetes, Toronto researchers suggest.

Their work, published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, looked only at data from Ontario. But the lead author, Tara Gomes, said the same may be true of other provinces as well.

A more rational policy on glucose self-testing by seniors with Type 2 diabetes could improve the quality of life for the people themselves and ease the strain on provincial coffers, said Gomes and colleagues from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and St. Michael's Hospital.

Any changes would not apply to people with Type 1 diabetes or people who control Type 2 diabetes with insulin. They need to regularly monitor their blood sugar levels and adjust their therapy accordingly. But clinical trials have found that performing multiple daily tests of blood sugar levels does not help people with Type 2 diabetes who aren't on insulin to control their condition. And there is some evidence it actually provokes anxiety and even depression. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costly expense

- The researchers estimate that over the next five years, Ontario's tab for the test strips used by people 65 and over will be $500 million. But in 2008 alone, over 60 per cent of strips dispensed went to people who aren't using insulin.

CPP teams up to buy Scottish mall
The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and U.K.-based Hammerson PLC have teamed up to buy a shopping mall in Scotland for about $505 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A possible silver lining for H1N1 flu

Outbreak may spur benefits for future vaccines: Experts

When you think of a flu pandemic, the images that come to mind are of people sick and people dying.

But influenza experts quietly admit there may be a silver lining — or several — to the H1N1 pandemic that erupted this year. Not just in the event itself, which was milder than feared, but also in the viral legacy it may leave.

In the wake of this pandemic, flu vaccine could be easier to make or could cover more targets. A tricky problem of drug resistance could disappear. And the toll influenza takes on the elderly could conceivably ease, at least for awhile.

Before going too far down What-If Road, however, it's important to note that predicting influenza's path is a mug's game. The longer people study it, the less likely they are to try to guess what influenza viruses may do.

"I don't know — right now everything's a possibility as far as I'm concerned," Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy, cautions when asked about what the flu landscape might look like in the aftermath of this pandemic.

Still, even experts who share that understanding are thinking about some possibilities.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Optimism

- Their optimism is in large part fuelled by a phenomenon known as viral replacement which has been seen in previous pandemics, or at least the three that have been studied using modern laboratory techniques. In simple terms, during the pandemics of the 20th century — 1918, 1957 and 1968 — the new virus snuffed out its viral predecessor.

B.C. Something to keep your mind off seal hunts



HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff from the SARA Marine Mammal Response Program successfully disentangled rope from a 500 kilogram Stellar sea lion near Race Rocks off Victoria, B.C. on Thursday and freed the animal. The rope was entangled around the sea lion's flipper and was tethered to a large rock, severely restricting the animal's movements.

Natives protest Olympic torch

VANCOUVER 2010 Aboriginal protesters vowing to stop the Olympic torch from entering their southern Ontario reserve gathered at the Six Nations boundary line yesterday.

Some 20 vehicles were parked on the side of the road leading into the reserve and protesters are flying both Mohawk Warrior and Iroquois Confederacy flags. The protesters said the Olympic flame has no place on native land. Six Nations leaders who support the torch run had planned to hold a relay through the reserve but switched gears yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

No plans to talk over NB Power buy

ENERGY The Quebec government says it has no plans to renegotiate a deal to buy New Brunswick's power utility.

Natural Resources Minister Nathalie Normandeau says renegotiating is not on Quebec's radar screen — because an agreement has already been hammered out.

She made the comments yesterday after a cabinet meeting in Quebec City.

Those remarks appear to pour cold water on the suggestion, coming out of New Brunswick, that the deal is somehow still a work in progress.

The New Brunswick government has come under intense political fire over its plan to sell the assets of NB Power for almost $4.8 billion.

That government has defended the sale by saying the money will help the province make investments in areas like education that will lead to a more prosperous future for New Brunswick.

But critics have called it a sellout of key assets.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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the Bay

New court date for relative in murder case

A 29-year-old man accused of murdering his 16-year-old female cousin in northern New Brunswick had his court date moved to Jan. 18. Hilary Bonnell's body was found after she attended a house party in September on the Esgenoopetitj First Nation. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto 18 treated to technology

Terror suspects given more laptop, TV access than norm in jail: Guards

Two correctional staff at the detention centre that has been housing some of the Toronto 18 terror suspects say they have been treated better than most inmates.

The Maplehurst detention centre correctional officer and supervisor were testifying yesterday at the sentencing hearing for Saad Gaya.


Saad Gaya

Gaya, 22, was among 18 people arrested in June 2006 in a massive terror plot and is one of four of those people to plead guilty.

The corrections staff told court yesterday that since a segregation order was lifted in June 2007 the 10 men jailed there have been treated better than other detention centre inmates.

They say special accommodations were made for the men's Muslim faith.

In addition, staff said that they have better TV access and have laptops in their cells due to a court order that they have 24-hour access to evidence in their cases.

The officers also testified that Gaya was very respectful, well-behaved and sometimes led prayer services for his co-accused when an imam wasn't available.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IOC, police seek anti-doping deal

WINTER GAMES International Olympic officials are trying to reach an agreement with Canadian law enforcement authorities on combating performance-enhancing drugs at the Winter Games in Vancouver. The two sides have not finalized terms of an anti-doping strategy for the Feb. 12-28 Games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

St. James
At the Armdale
Rotary 477-6770

Christmas Eve
4:00 p.m. – Family & Children's Eucharist
10:00 p.m. – Traditional Choral Eucharist

Christmas Day
10:30 a.m. – Holy Communion (said BAS)

New Years Eve
6:30 p.m. – Holy Communion (Chapel)

SAINT MARY'S CATHEDRAL BASILICA

CHRISTMAS MASSES
Christmas Eve
7:00pm with carols at 6:30pm
12 Midnight with carols at 11:30pm

Christmas Day
10:30am with carols at 10:00am

December 26th
12:15pm Mass
4:00pm (anticipated Mass)

New Year's Masses
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

New Year's Eve
4:00pm (anticipated Mass)
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
10pm - Midnight

New Year's Day
10:00am Mass
Archbishop's Levee
11:00am - 12:00pm
St. Mary's Church Hall

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Thursday, December 24th
Christmas Eve
4:00 pm Children & Families' Christmas Pageant

10:30 pm Special Music

11:00 pm Choral Holy Communion with the St. George's Brass Ensemble
Music by Gabrieli, Handl, Victoria and others

Friday, December 25th
Christmas Day
10:30 am Choral Holy Communion

Sunday, December 27th
The Feast of St. John the Apostle & Evangelist, and The First Sunday after Christmas
5:00 pm Choral Evensong, Music by Stanford, Guerrero and Palestrina
This service will be followed by the annual Christmas Party in the Parish Hall with carol singing, mulled wine, seasonal goodies and the odd French hen.

Sunday, January 3rd
The Second Sunday after Christmas
5:00 pm A Candlelight Service of Nine Lessons & Carols
Music by Leighton, Willcocks, Tavener and others
This service will be followed by a Champagne Reception in the Parish Hall hosted by the Choir.

Wednesday, January 6th
The Epiphany of Our Lord
7:30 pm Choral Holy Communion, *Preacher: The Rev'd Dr. Paul Friesen, Rector of St. Paul's, Halifax Music by Byrd, Lassus and Warlock*

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Candlelight, Carols, Quiet Reflection

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30AM
Sunday December 27: Christmas 1
Christ is With Us - *A Message for Life*
Now What? - Rev. Nelson A. Metcalfe
Seasonal Choral Music each Sunday

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Crime down across the board in U.S.

The FBI says the number of murders fell 10 per cent across the United States in the first half of 2009. Overall violent crimes fell by 4.4 per cent, and property crimes also dropped, by 6.1 per cent. Car thefts dropped significantly as well, falling nearly 19 per cent and continuing a sharp downward trend in that category. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Olmert pleads not guilty

Former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, left, is pleading not guilty to charges of illegally accepting funds from an American supporter and double-billing Jewish groups for trips abroad. The accusations relate to offences allegedly committed during Olmert's time as Jerusalem mayor and cabinet minister, but emerged when he was prime minister. He eventually resigned over the allegations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel **One for a thousand**



ODED BALILTY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Noam Schalit, father of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit, stands next to cardboard cut-outs of his son in Jerusalem yesterday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his top ministers debated whether to approve an emotionally charged deal to trade 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for an Israeli soldier held by Gaza militants for more than three years. Scan this barcode for the full article or go to metronews.ca/world

UN head encouraged by accord



"It is not perfect at this time, but it was a very important and very significant step forward."
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

CLIMATE CHANGE United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday defended the results of the Copenhagen climate change talks as a significant step toward a binding agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

He made the comments to reporters in response to criticism from world leaders that the process was flawed. Coming up with an accord member states could agree on was "quite difficult," Ban said, but he said he was encouraged by the results.

"It is not perfect at this time, but it was a very important and very significant step forward," he said.

The Copenhagen accord, put forward by a U.S.-led group of five nations, recognizes that an increase in global temperature should be kept to two degrees Celsius — the threshold that UN scientists say is needed to avert serious climate change. But the accord is not legally binding and has no long-term global targets for emissions cuts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Critical hurdle cleared for U.S. health care

U.S. President Barack Obama scored a major victory on his top domestic issue as Senate Democrats narrowly prevailed on a procedural vote yesterday backing his plan to overhaul America's health care system.

The vote all but ensures that the Senate will approve a bill extending health care to 30 million uninsured Americans before Christmas. But the final outcome remains unpredictable because the Senate measure must be reconciled with a starkly different bill already passed by the House of Representatives.

That is likely the most difficult step in the legislative process.

In yesterday's vote, all 58 Democrats and the Senate's two independents held together against unanimous Republican opposition, providing the exact 60-40 margin needed to shut down Republicans' threat to stall a vote.

Obama later called the vote "a big victory for the American people," adding that it will make a "tremendous difference for families, for seniors, for businesses and for the country as a whole."

The vote came shortly after 1 a.m. with the U.S. capital blanketed in snow. The unusual timing was necessary to permit a final Senate vote by Christmas Eve on Thursday, even if Republicans stretch out the debate as much as the rules allow.

Obama's oft-stated goal of a bipartisan health bill was not met, despite the president's extensive courtship of moderate Senator Olympia Snowe, the only Republican to support the bill in committee.

Even so, the vote represented a major victory for Democrats and Obama, who's now clearly in reach of passing legislation extending health coverage to nearly all Americans, a goal that's eluded a succession of past presidents.

The legislation would make health insurance mandatory for the first time for nearly everyone, provide subsidies to help lower-income people buy it, and induce employers to provide it with tax breaks for small businesses and penalties for larger ones.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's next

- Two more procedural votes await the Senate, each requiring 60 votes, the first of these set for this morning. Final passage of the bill requires a simple majority, and that vote could come as late as Thursday evening or tomorrow if Republicans agree.

Student pleads guilty in decapitation

VIRGINIA A former Virginia Tech student accused of decapitating another student at a campus eatery pleaded guilty to murder yesterday as prosecutors described the killer as an obsessed, jilted admirer.

Haiyang Zhu had fallen in love with Xin Yang but she rejected him, saying that she had a boyfriend she planned to marry, prosecutors said in revealing a motive for the first time.

Prosecutor Brad Finch described the attack in detail, noting that Yang suffered numerous defensive wounds to her hands and arms as she tried to fend off Zhu and a butcher knife. She eventually fell and he severed her head. He was holding it when police arrived. The killing stunned a campus that still had vivid memories of the mass slayings in April 2007, when a gunman, student Seung-Hui Cho, shot 32 people and then took his own life.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cuba **Kool concert**



FRANKLIN REYES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A fan of U.S. band Kool & the Gang shouts during their concert in Havana Sunday. The band became one of the few U.S. musical groups to play in Cuba in recent memory, despite Washington's travel restrictions and the island's communist government's ambivalence toward rock and hip hop.

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U.K. politicians agree to TV debates
Britain's three major political parties have agreed to participate in an unprecedented series of television debates. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico City OKs same-sex marriage

Mexico City lawmakers yesterday made the city the first in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage, a change that will give homosexual couples more rights, including allowing them to adopt children.

The bill passed the capital's local assembly 39-20 to the cheers of supporters who yelled: "Yes, we could! Yes, we could!"

Mexico City's left-led assembly has made several decisions unpopular elsewhere in this deeply Roman Catholic country, including legalizing abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

That decision sparked a backlash, with the majority of Mexico's other 32 states enacting legislation declaring life begins at conception.

The conservative Nation Action Party of President Felipe Calderon has vowed to challenge the gay marriage law in the courts. However, homosexuality is increasingly accepted in Mexico, with gay couples openly holding hands in parts of the capital and the annual gay pride parade drawing tens of thousands.

The change would allow same-sex couples to adopt children, apply for bank loans together, inherit wealth and be included in the insurance policies of their spouse, rights they were denied under civil unions allowed in the city.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Legality

- Seven countries allow gay marriages: Canada, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium. U.S. states that permit same-sex marriage are Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

Iran **Paying respects to Montazeri**



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two pro-reform Iranian women attend the funeral ceremony of Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, the spiritual father of Iran's reform movement, as they wear green headbands, the symbolic colour of Iranian opposition, in the holy city of Qom yesterday. Montazeri, who died Sunday at the age of 87, was a key figure in the 1979 Islamic Revolution who later accused his fellow clerical leaders of imposing dictatorship in the name of Islam.

Concerns follow Chinese envoy

TAIWAN A senior Chinese envoy's visit to Taiwan for trade talks has sparked a backlash among critics who fear the Taiwanese government's China-friendly policies are opening the door to eventual unification with the mainland.

Chen Yun-lin flew yesterday from Beijing to the central Taiwanese city of Taichung a day after tens of thousands of pro-independence demonstrators marched through its streets to protest President Ma Ying-jeou's push to link the island's economy ever closer to China's.

Many of the protesters view Chen as the spearhead for communist Beijing's proclaimed policy of uniting Taiwan with the mainland — the core of its Taiwan approach since the sides split amid civil war in 1949. They see Ma's policies as endangering Taiwan's sovereignty and its hard-won democracy.

Since taking office in May 2008, Harvard-educated Ma has eased tensions to their lowest level in 60 years, turning his back on predecessor Chen Shui-Bian's pro-independence policies.

Shortly after his arrival in Taichung, Chen Yun-lin acknowledged the progress the sides had already made and said he hopes that further gains can be made.

"History has proved and will prove that the two sides of the Strait are marching ahead on the right path,"he said. "We want to move down the road of peace."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Obama: I got the flu shot

WASHINGTON U.S. President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama have received their H1N1 flu shots. Obama said yesterday that he and his wife "just got the shots." A White House official later said Obama was vaccinated at the White House on Sunday and that Mrs. Obama was vaccinated a few days earlier. The president also encouraged everyone to get vaccinated against the H1N1 strain of flu now that the vaccine is available to the public. "I think people just need to understand if I had the two people that are most important in my life, my two daughters, get it right away ... then you need to make sure your children get it as well," he said.

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Nazareth **Walking with Jesus**


DAN BALILTY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rev. Jack Karam is seen yesterday at the excavation site of the first dwelling in Nazareth that can be dated back to the time of Jesus. Remains of a wall, a hideout and a cistern were found under an old convent courtyard in the northern Israeli city.

UN blames Guinean chief for murders

UN investigators say there is sufficient reason to believe that Guinea's wounded junta leader is directly responsible for the mass killings and rapes of protesters in September, which they consider crimes against humanity, a diplomat said yesterday.

The UN investigators also concluded that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that junta leader Capt. Moussa (Dadis) Camara, along with the army officer who shot Camara in a dispute on Dec. 3 and Guinea's anti-drug chief, bears "individual criminal responsibility" for the events of Sept. 28.

A 60-page report, in French, was transmitted to the UN Security Council, Guinea's government, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States this weekend. Its contents were first reported by Le Monde, the French daily newspaper.

The three-member UN commission, which interviewed 700 people to reach its findings, recommended that the International Criminal Court investigate those believed responsible for the killings, the Security Council diplomat said, speaking anonymously.

The report said 156 people died in the incident. The commission also said at least 109 women or girls were victims of rape and sexual mutilation, while others suffered "cruel and degrading treatment," and dozens of people were arrested or arbitrarily detained in military camps.

The junta has insisted only 57 people died and has denied rapes occurred.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Massacre

- On Sept. 28, soldiers loyal to Guinea's military ruler sealed off the exits of the national football stadium, where tens of thousands of protesters had gathered. Troops entered and fired assault rifles, spraying bullets into the crowd. A UN commission has concluded that 156 people died.

Man gets 12 years for killing rare tiger

CHINA A court has sentenced a man to 12 years in jail for killing a rare tiger in southwestern China. The official Xinhua News Agency said the court also ordered Kang Wannian to pay a fine of 100,000 yuan ($15,500), plus 480,000 yuan for state economic losses. Kang said he shot the animal after dark and did not know it was an endangered Indochinese tiger.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pope recalls trip to Holocaust memorial

SAINTHOOD Pope Benedict XVI yesterday recalled a visit to Israel's Holocaust memorial as a disturbing encounter with hatred. The Pope spoke days after angering Jewish groups by moving the controversial Second World War-era pope, Pius XII, a step closer to sainthood. Pius has been criticized for not speaking out during the Holocaust.

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A leader on the high road

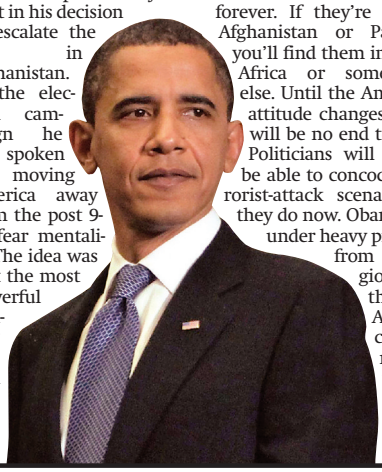


At long last the United States will get a semblance of a decent health-care system. Barring some unforeseen reversal, U.S. President Barack Obama's reform package will receive final approval next month.

It's far from ideal. There is no public option for example. But it's a major step forward after decades of repeated failed attempts.

This, along with the steadying of the American economy after its near collapse, will mark the most significant achievement of the first year in office for Obama. Many anticipated more from him. Following the years of regressiveness under former U.S. president George W. Bush, his expectations were enormous. But he has shown himself to be more of a middle-of-the-road compromiser than a reformer.

This was particularly evident in his decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan. In the election campaign he had spoken of moving America away from the post 9-11 fear mentality. The idea was that the most powerful military nation in the world would no longer be held hostage to little bands of terrorists hiding away in mountains. Yet though no one has laid a glove on the United States in eight years, the fear of what extremists might do was at the heart of the Afghan escalation.

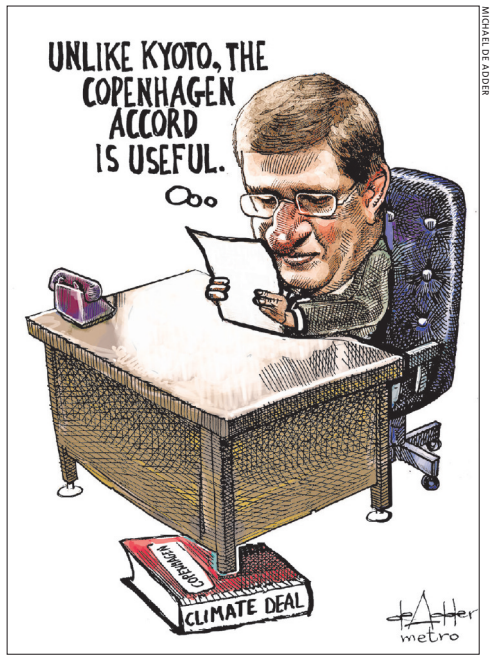


Terrorism will be around forever. If they're not in Afghanistan or Pakistan you'll find them in North Africa or somewhere else. Until the American attitude changes, there will be no end to wars. Politicians will always be able to concoct a terrorist-attack scenario, as they do now. Obama was under heavy pressure from the legions on the American right, now led by hillbilly Sarah Palin, who makes even Bush sound erudite. Had he not opted for more war, they would have pilloried him.

While the results of his first year have been mixed, it is still enormously comforting to have Barack Obama in place as the world's most powerful man. Watching him, you can see a calm and balanced and enlightened mind at work, a president with a global perspective who views the world without prejudice.

What a beautiful contrast this represents as compared to the narrow-minded confrontationalism of his predecessors. Unlike so many other leaders whose smaller minds are steeped in combat-politics, Barack Obama is one who is on the high road and who will stay there.

Lawrence Martin is a journalist and author of 10 books who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Not out of the jobless woods yet



So much for the jobless recovery. After scores of worrisome stories grousing that part-time jobs far too often replace full-time positions, and that an economic turnaround would fail to dent unemployment, Statistics Canada had some good news. It reported that 79,000 jobs were added in the month of November, almost half of which were full-time positions. Even the ravaged Ontario economy managed to add 27,000 jobs, the province's best monthly gain since September of 2008. Canada is hardly out of the woods — we're still 321,000 jobs shy of employment levels before the onset of recession — but the job picture is brightening the way it always does when the cycle turns up. Employers actually hire more people.

Then again, look at what they're being hired to do. The long-term trend in this respect is healthy, or not, depending on your point of view. More than 92 per cent of the jobs added in November were in the service sector. Roughly 78 per cent of the 16.9 million people now employed in Canada perform services rather than producing goods, up from 75 per cent five years ago. The major service categories in descending order of importance: Wholesale and retail trade; health care and social assistance; educational services; professional, scientific and technical services; and financial services. In the past year, the service sector has added 38,000 jobs. And over the past five years, the total number of service sector jobs has grown by nearly nine per cent.

We're still 321, 000 jobs shy of employment levels before the onset of recession.

The goods producing sector is a different story. If the Pythons were mocking Canada today, they'd be singing about lingerie salesmen instead of lumberjacks. In all, there are nearly eight per cent fewer goods producing jobs than there were five years ago. More than 295,000 goods producing jobs were lost in the year ended in November, with more than half of the cuts coming in manufacturing. Major job losses have also been felt in construction and natural resources, in the latter instance most recently in Timmins, Ont.

There are several reasons for our inexorable drift to a service economy, including globalization (the Chinese and others just make things more cheaply than we can), shifting commodity prices, and the general economic cycle. And at least we can console ourselves with the fact that it will be a private-sector-dominated service economy. The private sector, including company employees and the self-employed, accounts for about 80 per cent of total employment in Canada, only marginally less than it did five years ago.

Charles Davies is a veteran business writer who has worked for Canadian and international news organizations.

Worth mentioning

Dutch authorities seek to unravel mystery of young sailor's voyage

Her dream of becoming the youngest person to sail solo around the world shattered and under scrutiny over her quest, Dutch teenager Laura Dekker ran away from home — to the Caribbean 5,000 miles away.

Two days after she was reported missing, police managed to track the 14-year-old girl down on the island of St. Maarten.


Laura Dekker

Police and child care authorities were working Monday to uncover how exactly Laura got there and why she fled, as a family spokeswoman speculated the pressure of a court battle over the attempt had gotten to her.

It remained unclear if she had any plans to use the island, half of which is part of the Netherlands Antilles, as a start point for a sailing voyage.

She made international headlines in August when a court temporarily blocked her bid to set sail alone around the world in her eight-metre yacht Guppy.

If Laura were to get permission to set off on the voyage and successfully complete it, she would break a record set this year by 17-year-old Mike Perham of Britain, who sailed 45,000 kilometres around the world in nine months.

A 16-year-old Australian girl, Jessica Watson, is currently trying to beat Perham's record.

Utrecht District Court ruled in October Laura was too inexperienced for the marathon voyage. Judges sent her home to live with her divorced father and appointed a temporary guardian to ensure she did not set off on the voyage. They urged her to make better preparations and said they would reconsider her case in July.

In recent weeks she had been feeling drained by the pressure, said family spokeswoman Mariska Woertman.

Laura was expected to arrive back in the Netherlands on a flight early today police spokesman Bernhard Jens said. Police will then ask her how she managed to slip out of the country last week and whether anybody helped her.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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GM picks Microsoft CFO to run finances

General Motors Co. has hired an outsider to run its troubled finance operations, bringing in the chief financial officer of Microsoft Corp. Chris Liddell will join GM next year, GM CEO Ed Whitacre Jr. said in a statement yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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US 94.22¢	US $5.66	US $72.47	11,554.72
US 0.41¢	US 11.3¢	US 89¢	91.32

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Caution on housing urged

Hints by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty that Ottawa may tighten mortgage eligibility rules to avert a possible housing bubble sent ripples through the industry yesterday, with analysts urging a cautious approach to avoid damaging the economy.

"The main risk here is overshooting, over-responding and basically shutting down or slowing down significantly the housing market," CIBC senior economist Benjamin Tal said in an interview.

"That is a risk they have to take into account, because the housing market is a major, major contributor to overall economic growth and we are still in a very fragile state of the recovery."

Tal was reacting to a taped interview with CTV to be broadcast next weekend in which Flaherty said the government is worried Canadians may be taking on too much debt because of historically low interest rates and could get into trouble when rates inevitably rise to historical levels. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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ScanLife

Banks are being criticized for not lending, even after some have received hefty bailouts. However, some say trading, not lending, is the better economic fix for now. Scan this barcode for the full story or go to metronews.ca/business.

Shock jock Stern threatens



KATHY KMONICEK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Dec. 18 file photo, radio host Howard Stern, left, and his wife, Beth Ostrosky, talk while attending an NBA basketball game between the New York Knicks and Los Angeles Clippers in New York. Stern is threatening to leave Sirius XM Radio Inc. now that the shock jock and the satellite radio provider are getting set to enter contract talks in 2010.

Retail sales up in October

REBOUND Retail sales have returned to the levels last seen a year ago, when the recession began to bite, Statistics Canada reported yesterday.

Sales rose 0.8 per cent in October from the previous month to $35.3 billion, the eighth gain in 10 months.

The auto sector, especially new cars, led the rebound. Excluding this sector, sales actually edged down 0.2 per cent in October.

While automotive sales overall grew by three per cent from September, new car sales rose for a sixth consecutive month, gaining 3.6 per cent.

October was the first month this year where the value of new car sales was higher than in 2008. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Confident

- The Conference Board's consumer confidence index rose 3.7 percentage points in December after two straight months of decline.

Business in brief

WTO The World Trade Organization's top arbitrators upheld a ruling that China is illegally restricting imports of U.S. music, films and books, and Washington pushed forward with a new case accusing China of manipulating the prices for key ingredients in steel and aluminum production. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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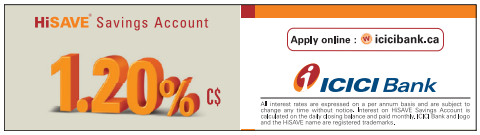
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Your Money

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA



Limit spending to cash

MoneyMatters



Q I plan to use my credit card to get me through this holiday season. Will the new credit card legislation reduce my interest rate or my ability to apply for more cards?

— Sondeep

A Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has proposed sweeping changes for credit card issuers. However, there are no provisions to force issuers to reduce the interest rate charged. You can apply to as many issuers as you deem appropriate, but that is not recommended, as it can work against your rating. You should have no more than one or two cards.

Using credit to finance your holiday season is not a good idea. Many Canadians fall into debt in December and carry balances on their credit cards that haunt them past Canada Day. For the holiday season, limit your spending to the cash in the bank.

Some of the changes Flaherty will introduce:

- Minimum 21-day interest-free period.
- Statements must give clear indication of how long it will take to pay off balances, if monthly minimum payments made.

Henry Choo Chong, CGA, can be reached at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

Keep holiday receipts

AlisonOnMoney

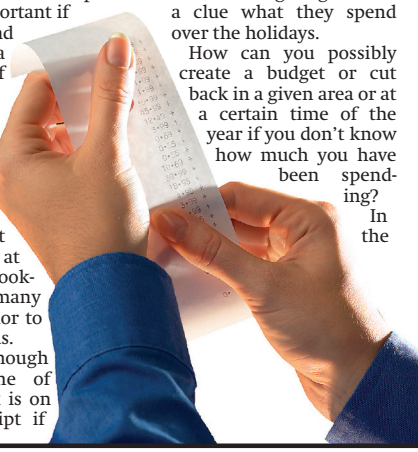


The whole paperless society chatter never took into account the blizzard that hits at this time of year. Wallets, purses and pockets overflow with receipts. Many frazzled shoppers cram them into drawers or inadvertently toss them in the recycling bin.

But come Dec. 26 when they realize how many returns need to be made, they'll rue not spending a bit of time keeping their holiday receipts in order.

My system is ridiculously easy. I have one file marked Christmas gift receipts and another marked Christmas Purchases Miscellaneous. After I return from a shopping trip, whether for gifts, food or decorations, I pull out every receipt and put it into one of the two files.

For gifts, write the name of the person and the items on the receipts. Tiffany's diamond ring, Dad's pajamas, Aunt Flo's candle, etc. This is particularly important if you tend to buy a lot of presents in a single category. Books are always on my list and I'm at the bookstores many times prior to Christmas. Even though the name of the book is on the receipt if you buy 10 to 15 books, my average every year, it's easy to forget who got each one.



There's another purpose in this two-file approach to holiday receipts. I'm always curious — aren't you? — about how much I spend every year. Ninety per cent of the folks I work with on budgeting haven't a clue what they spend over the holidays.

How can you possibly create a budget or cut back in a given area or at a certain time of the year if you don't know how much you have been spending? In the early part of January, before the holiday bills hit your mailbox, take an hour and add up your gift and non-gift purchases. You may pat yourself on the back for thrift but if you broke the bank you'll have a better idea about how and where to trim next year.

Alison's Money Rule:

- During the last days of Christmas shopping panic, your new best friend is a file marked Holiday Receipts.

Alison Griffiths is a financial journalist, author and host of Maxed Out on the W Network. Write to her at alison@alisongriffiths.ca.



Financial planning for same-sex couples is different, advisers warn

Major inroads have been made into broadening the rights of same-sex couples in Canada, but when it comes to financial planning advisers say important differences remain.

Often it comes down to how same-sex couples manage their long-term financial goals and whether they have really addressed what would happen if one partner was to die without the proper estate documents in place.

Some lesbian, gay, transgendered or bisexual individuals don't like to discuss their personal lives with outsiders, or they omit crucial details that could impact their financial futures. Examples range from children borne from a previous relationship to hopes of having children in their current one.

Catherine Watson, an estate planning lawyer at Boyne Clarke Barristers in Halifax, said Canadian couples typically review their finances around the time they tie the knot. Those triggers are relatively new in same-sex relationships, since the Canadian government only passed the Civil Marriage Act in 2005.

Watson said many same-sex couples choose to stay in long-term relationships, but not marry their partner, which often means that in-depth financial conversations are set aside.



GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Many same-sex couples don't like to discuss their personal lives with financial advisers or they omit crucial details.

"As soon as you decide that person is the one you care about, and you want to make sure they're protected... that's when you do it." Catherine Watson

"It's very important to have your documentation in place," Watson said. "As soon as you decide that person is the one you care about, and you want to make sure they're protected... that's when you do it."

Watson said one of the biggest misconceptions same-sex couples make is assuming that common law relationships fall in line with marriages in every legal respect.

From a tax perspective, the government treats benefits the same for marriages and common law relationships, but will and estate planning is an entirely different thing.

And some provinces treat common-law relationships differently, such as in Nova Scotia, where the relationship won't be recognized if the partner who dies never established a will or power of attorney.

Watson said unless the common-law couple lists their partners as beneficiaries, the government will defer the estate to a blood relative. Similar laws stand in P.E.I. and Quebec.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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- Plus More!

52 MPG▼



HWY: 5.4L/100KM • 52MPG▼
CITY: 8.0L/100KM • 35MPG

CASH PURCHASE PRICE
$14,289†
Freight not included

INCLUDES **$1,850*** CASH CREDIT
INCLUDES $1000◻ HOLIDAY BONUS

OR OWN IT! **$99*** BI-WEEKLY
with $0 down payment and purchase financing for 84 months

OR STEP UP TO THE 2010 COBALT LT

$15,909†
Freight not included
CASH PURCHASE PRICE

INCLUDES **$3,350*** CASH CREDIT
INCLUDES $1000◻ HOLIDAY BONUS

OR OWN IT! **$109*** BI-WEEKLY
with $0 down payment and purchase financing for 84 months

COMPARE, AND YOU WILL KNOW

	2010 CHEVROLET COBALT LT	2010 HYUNDAI ELANTRA L SEDAN	2010 HONDA CIVIC DX SEDAN
CASH PURCHASE PRICE	$15,909**	$15,849**	$15,990**
HEAD CURTAIN SIDE IMPACT AIRBAGS	Standard	Not Available	Standard
AIR CONDITIONING	Standard	Optional	Optional
16" ALUMINUM WHEELS	Standard	15" Steel	15" Steel
REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY	Standard	Not Available	Not Available
POWER DOOR LOCKS	Standard	Standard	Not Available
HP / TORQUE	155/150	138/136	140/128
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	5-year/160,000 km	5-year/100,000 km	5-year/100,000 km

With More than $2,000‡‡ in additional features than Hyundai or Honda

‡‡ Value of additional features based on dealer pricing. Vehicle comparison is based on 2010 Cobalt LT (1AL69/1AL37 1SA), 2010 Elantra L Sedan (D4T) and 2010 Civic DX Sedan (FA1529EX). ** Vehicle specification and purchase price according to the information available on the manufacturer's website at time of printing.

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HWY: 5.7L/100KM • 50MPG▼
CITY: 7.9L/100KM • 36MPG

★★★★★ FIVE-STAR SAFETY RATING¥

CASH PURCHASE PRICE
$12,149†
Freight not included

OR OWN IT!
$85* BI-WEEKLY
with $0 down payment and purchase financing for 84 months

INCLUDES **$2,350*** CASH CREDIT
INCLUDES $1000◻ HOLIDAY BONUS

OR ASK ABOUT 0%‡ PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MONTHS!

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CHEVROLET

For the latest information, visit us at gm.ca, drop by your local Chevrolet dealer or call us at 1-800-GM-DRIVE. ■ $9,000 manufacturer-to-dealer delivery credit available on 2009 Chevrolet Silverado HD pickups (tax exclusive) for cash customers only. $850/$2,350/$1,350 for 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A includes cash credit plus $1,000 Holiday Bonus. Credit will impact the effective APR for finance customers. See your GM dealer for details. ◻ $1,000 holiday cash bonus is a manufacturer-to-dealer delivery credit (tax exclusive) and is reflected in offers in this advertisement. Offer available on all 2009 and 2010 Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, GMC and HUMMER models and excluding all Saturn and SAAB models, Camaro, Express/Savana, Corvette ZR1 and Medium Duty Trucks. † Offers apply to the cash purchase prices of 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A new or demonstrator models and apply only to retail customers in the Maritimes. Freight ($1,350/$1,350/$1,350) not included. Cash purchase price reflects discounts or other incentives that are available when consumers opt for a cash purchase offer. By selecting lease or finance offers consumers are foregoing such incentives which may result in a higher effective interest rate. ▪ Financing available on approved credit only from TD Canada Trust; ask your dealer for additional information. Based on finance rates of 4.09%/4.09%/4.09% for 84/84/84 months for 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. Down payment and/or trade may be required. Monthly payment and cost of borrowing will vary depending on amount borrowed and down payment/trade. Example: $10,000 at 4.09%/4.09%/4.09% APR, the monthly payment is $137.10/$137.10/$137.10 for 84/84/84 months. Cost of borrowing is $1,516.40/$1,516.40/$1,516.40, total obligation $11,516.40/$11,516.40/$11,516.40. Freight of $1,350/$1,350/$1,350 included for bi-weekly payment. Bi-weekly payment based on a purchase price of $15,639/$17,259/$13,499 with $0/$0/$0 down payment. ‡ Financing available on approved credit only from GMAC; ask your dealer for additional information. Based on finance rates of 0%/0%/0% up to 36/36/36 months for 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. Down payment and/or trade may be required. Monthly payment is $27.77/$27.77/$27.77 for $1,000/$1,000/$1,000 borrowed and cost of borrowing is $0/$0/$0, total obligation $1,000/$1,000/$1,000. This Aveo5 LS R7A Down payment and/or trade may be required. Offer ends January 11, 2010. Depending on cash up to $2,350 on 2010 Chevrolet Aveo5 LS R7A. The monthly payment is $27.77/$27.77/$27.77 for $1,000/$1,000/$1,000 borrowed and cost of borrowing is $0/$0/$0, total obligation $1,000/$1,000/$1,000. Offer ends January 11, 2010. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 11, 2010. Offer applies only to 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. ¥ Based on Natural Resources Canada's 2009 Fuel Consumption Guide Ratings for competitors. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. Excludes other GM models. See dealer or gm.ca for additional details. ▲ GMCL will pay the first two months GMAC finance payments for finance terms up to 60 months only, paid up to a maximum monthly finance payment of $400 (tax included). Offer applicable to equal monthly finance agreements with GMAC and subject to GMAC credit approval. Visit gmstudentbonus.ca for more details. ¥ US government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program. For more information on safety ratings, go to www.safercar.gov. ¥¥ Return between 30-60 days with less than 4,000 km. Program applies to 2009 and 2010 models only; excludes demos, fleet, lease vehicles and medium duty trucks. Maximum damage allowed of $200. Vehicle usage fee and other restrictions apply. Not available with some other offers. Customer must take retail delivery by January 11, 2010. See dealer or gm.ca for additional details. 1 Available on approved TD Canada Trust purchase financing on terms of 84 months. The first three payments are offered at a maximum of $297 ($99 x 3) for the 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LT R7A and $255 ($85 x 3) for the 2010 Chevrolet Aveo5 LS R7A. The customer will be responsible for making all payments (e.g. 182 bi-weekly payments over 84 months) to the bank; however, he/she will be paid the equivalent of the first three payments by the dealership. The dealership will issue a cheque in the customer's name for the equivalent of three bi-weekly payments. License, insurance, registration, administration fees, tire warranty and handling (where applicable) and taxes not included. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 11, 2010. Offer applies only to 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. 2 Offers in this advertisement include the cost of 4 winter tires (up to a value of $450). Tire brand availability may vary depending on dealerships. Tire order may be required. Installation and balancing not included. Tire duties are extra and payable at time of delivery. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 11, 2010. Offer applies only to 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A.

Isnor, Feit earn Sport Nova Scotia honours

Bedford's Sean Isnor has been named Sport Nova Scotia's male team athlete of the month. The 14-year-old placed third in Ontario open judo at the under-17 level in November. Fellow judoka Heidi Feit of New Glasgow earned the female nod. METRO HALIFAX

Sports



Lions coach, players handed suspension

Halifax Lions head coach Troy Ryan has earned a one-game suspension in the aftermath of a brawl in a game against the Amherst Ramblers last Thursday. Skaters Ben Clarke, Justin Belanger and Kyle Dilosa earned two-game bans. The Ramblers were dealt similar suspensions. METRO HALIFAX

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

A perfect pre-season

After blowout victory over Vermont, Rainmen stand tall at 3-0

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The Halifax Rainmen are starting to make it look easy.

The Rainmen continued to gather steam last night as they wrapped up a perfect Premier Basketball League pre-season with a 128-83 blowout victory over the rival Vermont Frost Heaves before a crowd of 1,824 at the Metro Centre.

They're now 3-0 and getting better by the game, earning last night's 45-point demolition after a four-point come-from-behind win over the Manchester Millrats on Saturday and an 18-point triumph over the Quebec Kebs on Sunday.

"Being 3-0 in the pre-season is very big, but we have to realize it's just the pre-season," said Rainmen veteran Eric Crookshank, who had a 10-point, 10-rebound double-double.

"It's good to showcase our talent but we know these teams are going to regroup and come back strong."

It was no doubt a pleasure for returnees such as Crookshank to put the boots to the new-look Frost Heaves, who have beaten the Rainmen in 14 of 15 games the past two seasons.

"Everybody was brought here for a specific reason. If everybody plays their roles and plays defence, this team will be fighting for a championship."
Eric Crookshank

Everybody got in on the action, with eight players hitting double figures. Guard Tony Bennett led his team in scoring for the third straight day with 18 points, while Desmond Ferguson was next with 15.

Seven-foot-three Shagari Alleyne put up eight points with 14 rebounds and a whopping six blocks.

The pre-season was an opportunity for many of the team's key veterans to get comfortable in their roles.

"Everybody was brought here for a specific reason," Crookshank said. "If everybody plays their roles and plays defence, this team will be fighting for a championship."

The Rainmen feature five first-year pros and many of them saw significant floor time this weekend. It was a chance to prove themselves and adjust to the pro game.

One of them, point guard Adris Deleon, got a rude welcome to the PBL when Millrats star Al Stewart shut him down in the opener, but bounced back with 18- and 11-point outings.

"Every day I'm learning," said Deleon, an NCAA Division I product of Eastern Washington. "The first game, I was struggling, but my coaches said, 'Don't worry, keep playing hard, keep being aggressive.' It was a good experience."

PPG

- Halifax Rainmen pre-season points-per-game leaders:
- Tony Bennett 24.0
- Desmond Ferguson 11.7
- Eric Crookshank 11.7
- Mark McCarroll 11.7
- Gary Ervin 11.0
- Adris Deleon 11.0
- Gordon Malone 9.3
- Jevohn Shepherd 7.0
- Garry Gallimore 5.3
- Shagari Alleyne 4.0
- Lonnell Shuler-Jones 2.7
- Devon Norris 1.7



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Shagari Alleyne, the Rainmen's 7'3" centre, dunks the ball during the first half of last night's PBL exhibition game at the Metro Centre.

Former Moosehead Gilbert traded

HOCKEY David Gilbert, a former top draft choice of the Halifax Mooseheads, was dealt from the Quebec Remparts to the Bathurst Titan in a three-way trade yesterday.

Bathurst first sent a third-round pick to the Baie-Comeau Drakkar for forward Christopher Giroux, then sent Giroux and three draft picks to Quebec for Gilbert and three picks.



David Gilbert

Gilbert, 18, was drafted sixth overall by Halifax in 2007 but never played for the team. He was traded to the Remparts in December 2007.

The Titan also dealt goalie Nicholas Champion and a first-round import pick to the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies for forward Zach O'Brien and a second-round pick in 2010 and first-round picks in 2010 and 2011.

METRO HALIFAX

Season inching closer for Rainmen

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

BASKETBALL The Halifax Rainmen have two weeks to fine-tune before the Premier Basketball League season opens.

The Rainmen, who wrapped up the pre-season last night with an emphatic 128-83 win over the Vermont Frost Heaves, will practice daily at the University of King's College before hitting the road to face the Lawton-Fort Sill Cavalry on Jan. 3.

Owner Andre Levingston and head coach Les Berry now have a good feel for what their players can do, and will meet this week to determine if any changes need to be made.

"We've got a few things we need to discuss," Levingston said. "We're going to sit down and see if we think we can compete for a championship and we'll make some decisions."

Based on the pre-season, it's clear guard Tony Bennett will be the Rainmen's shining star, with complementary leading roles going to Desmond Ferguson and Eric Crookshank.



METRO HALIFAX FILE PHOTO

Guard Garry Gallimore could receive regular time off the bench for Halifax this year.

From there, a sizeable chunk of remaining floor time appears earmarked for guards Adris Deleon and Gary Ervin and forwards Mark McCarroll and Gordon Malone.

Guards Garry Gallimore and Jevohn Shepherd and centre Shagari Alleyne could receive regular minutes in supporting roles off the bench.

"We were really looking to see who would compete," Levingston said. "It's rough on guys playing three games on a row, but they competed, and that was great to see."

"We're going to sit down and see if we think we can compete for a championship and we'll make some decisions."
Andre Levingston, Rainmen owner

The Rainmen are on the road against the Quebec Kebs on Jan. 7 and open at home against the Kebs on Jan. 10.

m.metronews.ca

Scan this barcode for the most recent Sports updates on your smartphone.
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

Sports in brief

HOCKEY Halifax Mooseheads rookie Brent Andrews will serve as an assistant captain for Team Atlantic at the world under-17 hockey challenge starting Dec. 28 in Timmins, Ont. The 16-year-old centre from Hunter River, P.E.I., will be a leader for the squad along with captain Stephen Woodworth, a Middleton native who plays for the junior A Halifax Lions, and fellow assistant Bryce Milson of the Bathurst Titan. Andrews has two goals and five assists in 37 games. He had a goal in five games at last year's tournament. The tournament concludes Jan. 5.

METRO HALIFAX

QMJHL

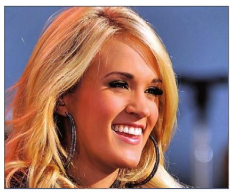
QMJHL GAMES

DEC. 21-26
Holiday Break. No Games Scheduled.

SUNDAY, DEC. 27
Saint John at Acadie-Bathurst
P.E.I. at Cape Breton
Moncton at **HALIFAX**
Chicoutimi at Quebec
Val-d'Or at Rouyn-Noranda
Gatineau at Shawinigan
Lewiston at Victoriaville

MONDAY, DEC. 28
Victoriaville at Lewiston
Shawinigan at Drummondville
Montreal at Gatineau
Quebec at Rimouski

Holmgren joins Browns
Mike Holmgren has decided to see if he can fix the Cleveland Browns. The Super Bowl-winning coach accepted a job to become the club's president yesterday, joining a franchise needing a major makeover after a decade of losing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS


Carrie Underwood


Mike Fisher

GETTY IMAGES

Sens forward to wed country music star

Senators centre Mike Fisher has agreed to a new long-term deal, but it has nothing to do with hockey.

Fisher has confirmed reports that he and country music superstar Carrie Underwood are engaged.

"Yeah, it's true," he told reporters after the team's practice yesterday morning. "We're both obviously excited and very happy."

No date for the wedding has been set. The hockey heartthrob, who's one of the team's most popular players, began dating the former American Idol winner over a year ago after being introduced through a mutual friend.

Rumours of the engagement began swirling on Twitter pages and websites Sunday when a family friend of Underwood, a 26-year-old Nashville resident, tweeted a congratulations to the couple.

"It's great. It's a long time coming," said Chris Neil, Fisher's closest friend on the team. "I think there's going to be a lot of broken hearts in Ottawa with all those girls who are in love with Mikey … But he's met a great girl."

Fisher, a 29-year-old from Peterborough, Ont., faced a large media scrum after the players skated ahead of their game against the Boston Bruins last night.

"I think you guys knew before I did," Neil told reporters. "It came out on Twitter about 20 minutes after (Fisher's proposal)."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Women's team features speedy, skilled blue-liners

The key component of Canada's Olympic women's hockey team is fast, skilled defenders who can contribute offensively.

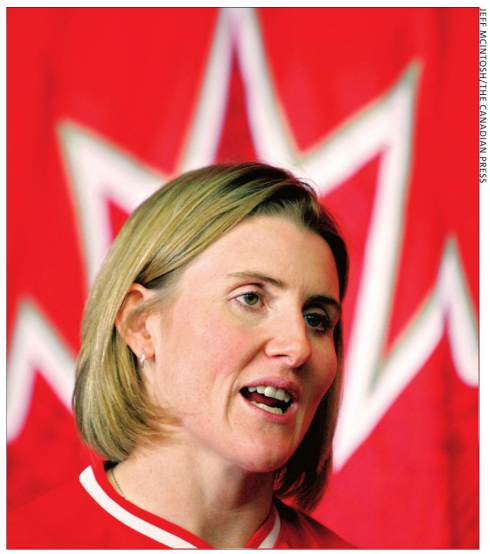
The 21-player roster unveiled yesterday includes three young defencemen with considerable offensive upside.

Edmonton's Meaghan Mikkelson, Montreal's Catherine Ward and Tessa Bonhomme of Sudbury, are among seven players on the team who will make their Olympic debuts Feb. 13, when Canada opens defence of the gold medal against Slovakia.

Head coach Melody Davidson, who was also behind the bench at the 2006 Olympics in Turin, Italy, has been cultivating defencemen who can both protect Canada's end of the ice and generate goals.

"Over the last four years, we've been building depth at defence," Davidson said.

The roster includes familiar faces such as Hayley Wickenheiser of Shaunavon, Sask., Winnipeg's Jennifer Botterill, Jayna Hefford of Kingston and Becky Kellar of Hagersville, Ont., who will all play in their fourth Olympic Games.


JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Captain Hayley Wickenheiser is interviewed after the Canadian women's hockey team was announced in Calgary yesterday.

Calgary's Carla MacLeod, named the most valuable player at the world championships earlier this year, is one of the best offensive defenders in the game.

Davidson retained her, Colleen Sostorics of Kennedy, Sask., and Kellar as defencemen from the 2006 squad. Kellar and Sostorics play a more defensive-style of game.

"I look at our defence and I think we've got a balance of offensive, mobile defence and the stay-at-home, solid defensive defencemen when you look at Sostorics or Kellar," said Wickenheiser, who was also named captain yesterday.

Davidson released two players Sunday night to get down to three goaltenders, six defencemen and 12 forwards.

The players will have a short holiday break starting today before facing the U.S. in exhibition games Dec. 30 in St. Paul, Minn., and Jan. 1 in Ottawa.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports in brief

CFL Recently fired Winnipeg Blue Bombers head coach Mike Kelly will remain in legal limbo until the New Year. Kelly was supposed to appear in a Pennsylvania court tomorrow on domestic assault charges, but his lawyer can't attend and has asked for a new date that will likely be in January.

BASEBALL Free-agent pitcher Jason Marquis and the Washington Nationals have agreed to a two-year contract, pending a physical, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press yesterday. One person said the agreement is worth about $15 million US.

UFC The injury-plagued UFC 108 card was finally completed yesterday with the addition of bouts featuring welterweights Paul Daley and Dustin Hazelett, and lightweights Duane Ludwig and Jim Miller. The mixed martial arts show will take place Jan. 2 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

NHL

NHL OVERALL STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-New Jersey	35	26	8	1	106	75	53
d-Washington	36	22	8	6	130	100	50
d-Buffalo	35	22	10	3	94	76	47
Pittsburgh	37	25	11	1	116	95	51
Boston	35	17	11	7	90	87	41
Atlanta	35	18	13	4	115	108	40
Ottawa	36	18	14	4	100	103	40
Florida	38	16	15	7	111	122	39
N.Y. Rangers	36	17	16	3	99	102	37
Montreal	38	17	18	3	97	107	37
Tampa Bay	36	13	14	9	91	109	35
Toronto	37	13	16	8	106	130	34
N.Y. Islanders	37	13	17	7	90	120	33
Philadelphia	35	15	18	2	95	103	32
Carolina	36	9	21	6	89	131	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-Chicago	34	23	8	3	103	71	49
d-Colorado	38	21	11	6	113	110	48
d-San Jose	35	20	8	7	115	93	47
Nashville	36	22	11	3	106	101	47
Los Angeles	37	22	12	3	111	108	47
Calgary	35	20	11	4	101	87	44
Phoenix	36	21	13	2	91	83	44
Dallas	35	15	10	11	105	108	41
Detroit	36	18	13	5	98	96	41
Vancouver	36	20	16	0	110	93	40
Minnesota	36	17	16	3	93	103	37
St. Louis	34	15	14	5	84	95	35
Anaheim	35	14	14	7	99	111	35
Columbus	36	14	15	7	103	126	35
Edmonton	35	15	16	4	105	113	34

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Montreal 4 Atlanta 3 (OT)
Boston 2 Ottawa 0
Buffalo 3 Toronto 2 (OT)
Colorado 4 Minnesota 3
Florida 4 Philadelphia 1
New Jersey 4 Pittsburgh 0
N.Y. Rangers 3 Carolina 1
San Jose 4 Dallas 2
Tampa Bay 4 N.Y. Islanders 2
St. Louis at Edmonton
Columbus at Phoenix

TODAY'S GAMES

San Jose at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Anaheim at Colorado, 10 p.m.
Nashville at Vancouver, 10:30 p.m.

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Milwaukee 84 Indiana 81
Orlando 104 Utah 99
Sacramento 102 Chicago 98
San Antonio 103 L.A. Clippers 87
Cleveland at Phoenix

TODAY'S GAMES

Philadelphia at Washington, 7 p.m.
Detroit at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Chicago at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Golden State at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Portland at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Houston, 8:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

NFL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

N.Y. Giants at Washington



Children diagnosed with autism

About one in 110 children in the United States have autism, according to the U.S. government's latest estimate released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Autism is diagnosed by making judgments about a child's behaviour; there are no blood or biologic tests. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health & Beauty

EDITOR: JENNIFER.PRITTIE@METRONEWS.CA

Surviving stressful situations

CELIA MILNE
for Metro News

Ahh, the holidays. And family. And patterns of behaviour that never change. Your mother makes you feel fat. Or skinny. You always fight with your brother. Your sister bugs you about driving a nice car. How can you survive holiday conflicts and come out feeling good about yourself?

While you are running around getting ready for the holidays, spend a little time thinking about the mental traps you fall into, and what you can do differently. Plan ahead your response to comments you find toxic.

"We have to work to predict what will be difficult for us based on our history with the family, and make a plan," says Merryl Bear, director of the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) in Toronto.



Take time out for yourself and to unwind over the holidays.

NEDIC staff posted a helpful document on their website called Coping with the Holidays. It's written for people with eating disorders, but many of the tips are applicable to anyone who feels vulnerable at this time of year.

"Family get togethers are difficult for many of us, regardless of whether we have a psychological illness or not," says Bear. "Always think in the holiday season, people are not going to change."

It's easy during family events to put the needs of others ahead of your own. Here are some tips to rejuvenate:

- Plan which events you will attend and which you won't. It's OK to say no.
- Plan to have restorative time for your own needs: Go to a movie, turn off the phone, or take a walk.
- Visit or call a trusted friend. You can even let this person know ahead of time that you may need to do this.

"Always think in the holiday season, people are not going to change."
Merryl Bear, director of the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC)

- Buy yourself a present.
- Plan to do volunteer work or join an interest or support group if you are likely to feel lonely, empty or depressed. Build some structure into your holidays.

If the holidays are difficult for you, it's important to spend a little time thinking about which people make you feel uncomfortable and what to do about it. Do you want to avoid these people altogether? If not, predict what these people might say to you. Plan your response, and even practice saying it.

NEDIC recommends saying positive things to yourself. Before events, think "I am entitled to …" During events, "I can handle this." After events, "I did very well."

For instance, you might say to yourself after an event, "I can see that my sister is upset, but it was important that I take care of myself."

Remind yourself that you are a worthy individual and are entitled to respectful behaviour.

If someone is being difficult, "Just let it pass. It actually isn't about you. It's about the other person," says Bear.

Which product goes on first, reducing skincare confusion

JANINE FALCON
for Metro News

SKINCARE Our appetite for anti-aging solutions feeds a constant release of new technology, ingredients and formulations. As a result, skin care regimens have become more complicated than wash-dry-moisturize. Now we have AHAs, retinol, SPF, vitamin treatments, topical lighteners, concentrated serums and more.



NeoStrata Smoothing Cream Level 1 with four per cent glycolic acid, $36.

"I find that women have trouble figuring out the order of products," comments dermatologist Dr. Paul Cohen, who appears regularly on Canada AM.

A new Applications Tips feature on NeoStrata.ca can help reduce application confusion whether or not the site visitor uses a full regimen of products. NeoStrata, a Montreal-based Canadian company, specializes in anti-aging and anti-acne care in formulations ranging from cleansers to at-home dermatological treatments.

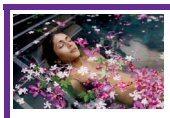
Executive Vice President Lucy Papas says their staff prompted the initiative. "Every time we'd launch something new, there'd be someone eager to use it who would ask, 'Now, do I put on my Vitamin C first, or my retinol first?' We realized that if we in the industry have these concerns and questions, surely there must be more people out there who do," she explains.

NeoStrata's tips outline the application order of specific types of day and night formulas. Each step also provides a "why" that can be applied to skincare in general. For example, a note linked to the Vitamins & Serums step explains that applying them before moisturizer allows skin to absorb them better, and that "moisturizer creates a barrier which keeps your skin hydrated and locks in the benefit of the vitamins." That's information even non-NeoStrata users can appreciate.



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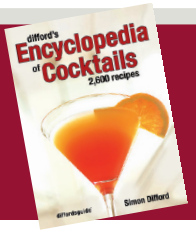


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New preservative-free food line

Paleo Brands, Inc. is introducing a new gourmet entrée and snack line that will launch Jan. 4. The line will consist of unprocessed, preservative-free, grass fed meats, wild caught fish, vegetables, fruits and nuts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Food



Cocktail encyclopedia

Simon Difford is addicted to cocktails. So much so that he's made and sampled 2,600 mixed drinks during his career as a bar owner and founder of his own import company in London, England. Now for those who want to learn more about making cocktails, Difford's Encyclopedia of Cocktails, 2600 Recipes (Firefly, hardcover, $45) has just been published. The book features photos of finished cocktails with their recipes and origin. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Personal Gourmet recipe of the month

ROSE REISMAN

Have your cake & eat it too!

The holiday season is all about decadent desserts.

I love the combination of chocolate and cheesecake. These recipes include variations on both these delicious ingredients. The best part is that they are all conscious of calories and fat. So you can actually have your cake and eat it too!



Marble mocha cheesecake, above, and chocolate sour cream cheesecake squares, right.

Marble Mocha Cheesecake

Coffee and chocolate go so well with this creamy cheese batter. You can double this recipe: bake it in a 10-inch pan and add another 10 minutes to the baking time, baking until the center is still loose.

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 40 MINUTES
SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cups chocolate wafer crumbs
- 2 Tbsp water
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 ⅔ cups smooth light ricotta
- ⅓ cup softened light cream cheese
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup light sour cream or 2 per cent yogurt
- 1 ½ Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules
- 2 tsp hot water
- 3 Tbsp semi-soft chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vegetable oil

Make ahead: Refrigerate for up to 3 days. Freeze up to 2 weeks

METHOD:

1. Spray an 8-inch springform pan with cooking oil. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. For the crust, combine the crumbs, sugar, water and oil. Mix thoroughly. Press into the bottom and partially up the sides of the prepared springform pan.
3. For the filling, beat the ricotta, cream cheese, sugar, egg, sour cream, flour and vanilla in a large bowl or food processor until well blended. Dissolve the coffee granules in the hot water. Add to the batter and mix until incorporated. Pour the batter over the crust and smooth the top.
4. Place the chocolate chips and oil in a small bowl and microwave on medium high for 30 seconds or just until soft. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the top of the batter. Draw a knife or spatula through the batter several times to create a marbled effect.
5. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes. The center will be slightly loose when you jiggle the cake.
6. Cool on a rack. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before removing the sides of the pan and serving.

Chocolate Sour Cream Cheesecake Squares

Chocolate cheesecake in any way, shape or form is not to be refused. These luscious squares have a brownie-type crust that's simply mouth-watering. They freeze beautifully and my children love to eat them frozen—they say it tastes like a creamy frozen chocolate bar! To get chocolate chunks, use a sharp knife to shave off pieces from a solid block of chocolate.

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES
SERVES 16

INGREDIENTS:

Crust

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract
- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour

Filling

- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup smooth light ricotta
- ¼ cup light cream cheese, softened
- 2 Tbsp low-fat sour cream
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract

Topping

- chocolate chunks or 2 Tbsp chocolate chips

METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking oil.
2. For the crust, combine the sugar, cocoa, oil, egg, and vanilla in a bowl. Stir in the flour, mixing just until combined. Pat the mixture into the bottom of the prepared dish.
3. For the filling, combine the sugar, cocoa, flour, ricotta, cream cheese, sour cream, egg and vanilla in a food processor. Purée until the mixture is smooth.
4. Spread it over the crust.
5. Bake in the center of the oven for 20 to 25 minutes. The center will still be slightly loose in the middle when the pan is jiggled.
6. Sprinkle with the chocolate, cool to room temperature on a rack and refrigerate until chilled.

About Rose



Rose Reisman is an author, media personality, nutritionist, and the inspiration behind a fresh food delivery service, Personal Gourmet, and new website, The Art of Living Well. Visit Rose at rosereisman.com & personalgourmet.ca

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell



metronews.ca/liquidassets

Dinner pairing

While I'm sure some of you would like a liquid recommendation for roast beef (try a full-bodied cabernet sauvignon), ham (pick a New World pinot noir), lamb (a medium-bodied Aussie shiraz) or even lobster (nothing beats a ripe New Zealand sauvignon blanc); here are some thoughts on matching wine with the big bird and its varied side dishes. A classic roast turkey dinner is surprising forgiving when it comes to a wine partner.

In reds think California Zinfandel, Italian Chianti or a Frenchmen from Beaujolais or the Southern Rhône Valley.

For a bottle of white, choose a mid-priced chardonnay from Australia, Chile or France's Burgundy region or a German with a touch of sweetness like **Moselland's 2008 Ars Vitis Riesling ($9.95 - $17.99)** - a bright, refreshing wine that will go with just about anything you plan on serving along with Tom turkey.



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Blumer culinary adventures

Host Bob Blumer returns with Glutton for Punishment season four on Jan. 4. It premieres on the Food Network Canada. In this final season of the series, Blumer tackles 13 exciting food challenges around the globe. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Julie & Julia author is back with meaty read

BOOK Julie Powell's new book is not for the squeamish, in more ways than one.

It opens with her in the back of a butcher shop, flecked with blood and reeking of meat. She's busy slicing a raw, slippery liver with a foot-long knife.

By the end of the book, another internal organ — her heart — has been filleted: Powell dissects the pain caused by her two-year affair with an old college flame that sent her into an emotional tailspin and almost sunk her marriage.

It's all a bit, well, messy. What happened to our spunky blogger and best-selling author with a "sainted husband" who spent a year making Julia Child's food, the young woman whose story made up half of the charming Nora Ephron-directed film Julie & Julia?

Powell, in an interview at a coffee shop near her Queens home, admits readers may find her sophomore effort — titled Cleaving: A Story of Marriage, Meat and Obsession — a bit jarring.



CARLO ALLEGRI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Author Julie Powell.

"People coming from the movie Julie & Julia and picking up Cleaving are going to be in for some emotional whiplash," she says, laughing.

While there are a dozen or so recipes, this is definitely not a cookbook. Instead, Powell reveals the pain of loving two men at once, of her fondness for sado-masochism and even a bout of self-punishing sex with a stranger. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Warm up to winter

Cocktail recipes that can be enjoyed after a long, cold day

These elegant hot drinks can be enjoyed on their own — think of a boozy coffee or hot cocoa topped with whipped cream after a long, cold day of holiday shopping — or in the place of dessert.



KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



COLIN MACCONNELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Algoma winter warmer, left, and scorched marshmallow hot chocolate, right.

Scorched marshmallow hot chocolate

When he created this decadent cocktail, Jonathan Humphrey, bar manager of the Drake Hotel in Toronto, Ont., was inspired by a childhood memory of enjoying a steaming mug of hot chocolate with a marshmallow on top after tobogganing.

MAKES 1 DRINK

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup steamed 10 per cent cream
- 2 Tbsp chocolate syrup, or to taste
- 1 oz Frangelico
- 3 large marshmallows, skewered on a soaked wooden skewer
- Whipped cream

METHOD:

In large mug, combine cream and chocolate syrup. Stir in Frangelico.

Using crème brûlée torch or barbecue lighter, carefully toast marshmallows, letting them very briefly catch fire. With marshmallows ablaze, gently dunk them in hot chocolate mixture, extinguishing flame. Top with whipped cream.

Hot buttered rum

Bill Sweete, co-owner of Sidecar and Negroni in Toronto, Ont., was inspired by Swedish Glögg for his hot tipple, but swapped out the wine for the richer tastes of two kinds of rum and uses a flavourful compound butter to add spice and sweetness.

MAKES 1 DRINK

INGREDIENTS:

Glögg Compound Butter:

- 1/2 cup dried sour cherries
- 1 to 2 tbsp rum or water, depending on your taste
- 1/2 cup salted butter, at room temperature
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp each: ground allspice, ground cardamom
- 1/2 tsp each: ground nutmeg, ground cloves

Drink:

- 1 oz each: dark rum, light rum
- 1 oz honey syrup (mix and heat equal parts honey and water)
- 2 to 4 oz hot water, or to taste
- 1 or 2 whole star anise, for garnish

METHOD:

For Glögg Compound Butter, add cherries and rum or water to food processor. Blend until cherries are finely chopped. Add butter, sugar, allspice, cardamom, nutmeg and cloves. Process just until mixed.

Transfer to counter or cutting board. Form into log, about 2 inches in diameter. Roll in waxed paper or plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm. (Leftover butter can be refrigerated and used as a topping for warm cake, pie or pastries.)

For drink, add two rums, honey syrup and water to taste to heatproof mug. Cut 1/2-inch disc from chilled Glögg Compound Butter; add to hot drink. Stir until well mixed. Garnish with star anise.

Algoma winter warmer

Grace Restaurant (Toronto, Ont.) co-owner Chris Hoffman makes good use of cider produced at his wife, Lesle Gibson-Hoffman's, family orchard in Newcastle to make this warm, spiced cocktail that smells like apple pie just out of the oven. Hoffman uses Algoma's apple cider.

MAKES 1 DRINK

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp hazelnuts
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1-1/2 oz spiced rum
- 1/2 oz Frangelico
- 2 oz apple cider, warmed
- Ground cinnamon

METHOD:

In small baking pan, bake nuts in preheated 350F oven 10 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned and blistered. Wrap in clean dish towel; let steam 1 minute. Rub in towel to remove loose skins. Let cool.

In food processor, finely crush sugar and hazelnuts.

Moisten rim of a glass and press into crushed mixture to form a rim. Add rum, Frangelico and cider. Stir gently. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Swift, Depp favourite celebs
The results are in. Popeater.com has names Taylor Swift and Johnny Depp as its favourite celebrities of the year after asking its readers. Jennifer Aniston and George Clooney were the runner-ups. **POPEATER.COM**

Entertainment



Bond Girl
Susan Boyle is being tipped to record the next James Bond song. The Scottish star is said to be thrilled at the prospect of being chosen to lend her voice to the movie, which is due in 2011. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Swift named top entertainer

Associated Press title caps monumental year for the 20-year-old country singer

It's a love story, baby.

Taylor Swift sang those words about a young romance, but they apply just as well to America's feelings for the 20-year-old country singer. Swift, adding to the heap of awards already bestowed on her, has been voted The Associated Press entertainer of the year.

Swift was chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country in a survey of AP members. She follows last year's winner, Tina Fey, and 2007's pick, Stephen Colbert.

"I am so honoured and so excited," Swift said in an interview by phone with the AP. "This was so unexpected, and I could not be more grateful."

Though her second album, Fearless, came out in late 2008, Swift was ubiquitous in 2009.

She found critical acclaim for her autobiographical and infectious songwriting, exemplified in tunes such as Love Story and White Horse. She led a sold-out tour across 52 cities in North America.

She won album of the year from the Country Music Awards and the Country Music Association Awards. She hosted Saturday Night Live and performed at the Grammys. She won five American Music Awards, including artist of the year.

"She defines crossover appeal and would seem to be a strong business model in a declining music business."
Ellis Widner

At one point, she had eight songs on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Swift said that several nights of her year were "golden and shiny and I'll remember forever." Hosting SNL was one of those.

"That entire week was life-changing, honestly," said Swift. "It makes you feel so thankful to be a part of the music industry, but more than that, to me, SNL is show business."

Another live show, the MTV Video Music Awards, was more of a mixed blessing for Swift. She was accepting the award for best female video (the first VMA to be given to a country act) when Kanye West stormed the stage and interrupted her speech. West's stunt set off a media storm that perhaps said as much about Swift's popularity (fans and musicians alike came to her defence) than it did about West's.

Among those who voted for Swift for entertainer of the year was Danielle L. Kiracofe, entertainment editor for the Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper.

"In a time of 'made' musicians, she writes her own songs and has her own sparkly style," said Kiracofe. "She's managed to do all of this with grace, class and poise — and without uttering a swear word, dancing on a pole or wearing next to nothing. At the age of 20."

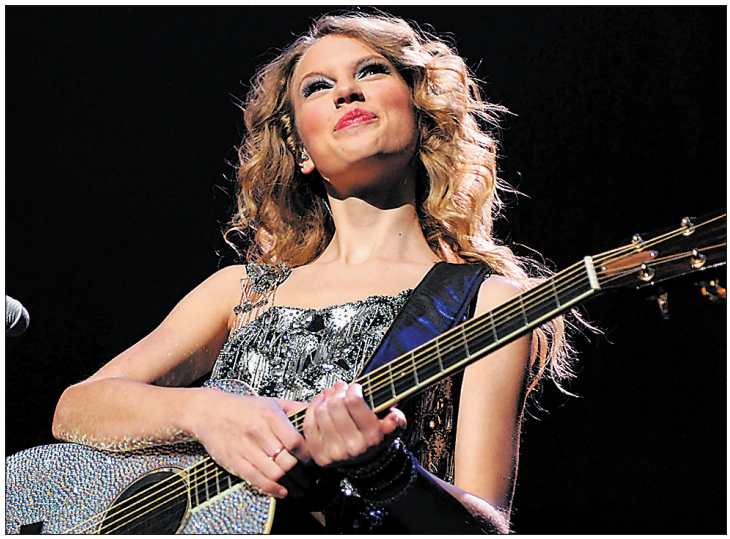
Ellis Widner, style editor for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, applauded Swift for superseding generational boundaries.

"She defines crossover appeal and would seem to be a strong business model in a declining music business," Widner said.

At year's end, Swift's life is in flux. She'll soon move out from home with her family, making this Christmas an emotional one for her. She may well have more trophies to haul in, too. In January, she'll be attending the Grammys, where she's nominated for eight awards. She's already begun to look beyond 2009.

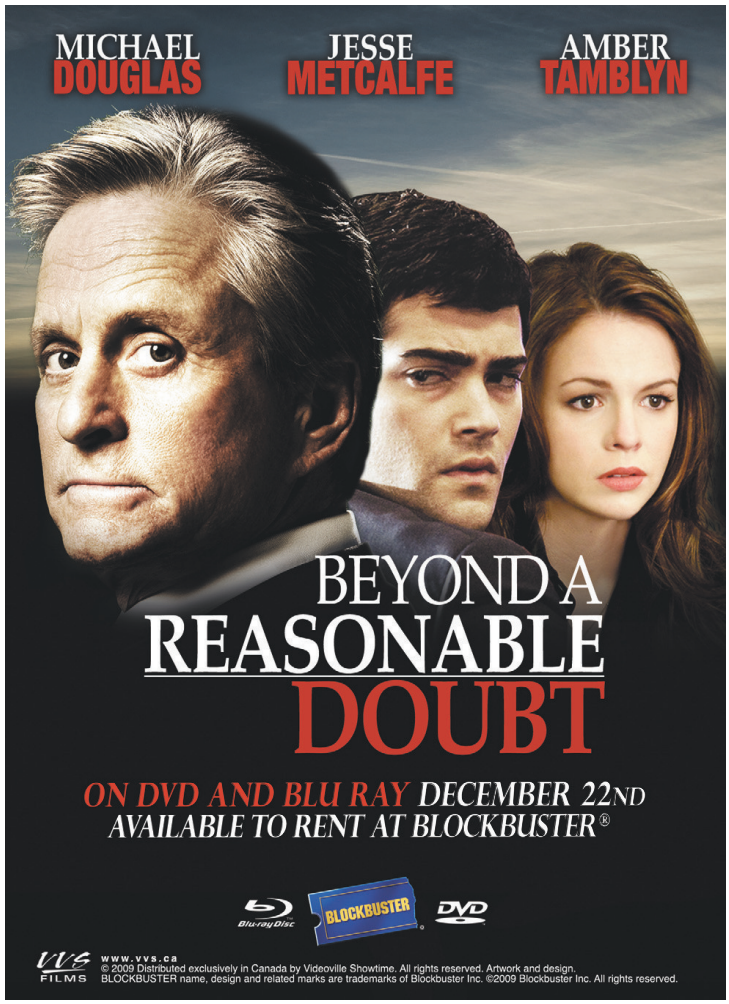
"The second that I put out Fearless, the moment that album came out and I was done with it, I started writing for my next album," said Swift. "I love to plan 20 steps ahead of myself, and it's really fun competition game that I play with myself, trying to top what I've done last."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Country star Taylor Swift — who at one point had eight songs on the Billboard Hot 100 and is nominated for eight Grammys — was voted entertainer of the year in a poll by The Associated Press.





Ricci releases new film

Christina Ricci has made a new short-film for DKNY. The Monster actress features in four different scenarios in the film, designed to show off the ways which the fashion house's leather Eldridge bag can be used. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Movie experiences that defined the decade

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

From computer-animated innovation to comic-book crusaders coming to life on the big-screen, the past decade in movies has been as remarkable as any period in cinema's century of existence.

Sure, it also gave us such goose eggs as Gigli and Battlefield Earth but for every box-office bomb there's been a fantastic work of art that has transformed its genre and explored imagination. Here's a look at the best cinematic experiences of the last ten years.

Lord of the Rings

Of course there were actually three movies, but Peter Jackson's daunting adaptations should truly only be considered as one. Either way, this stirring trilogy earned 30 Oscar nominations and won the Best Picture in 2004.

The Dark Knight

The decade's only film to solidly give the reigning all-time box office champ (Titanic) a run for its money, this Batman thriller is history's top-earning comic-book movie. Plus, who could forget Heath Ledger's Oscar-winning turn as the malevolent Joker?

No Country for Old Men

The Coen Brothers continued to shine with this amazing rendition of Cormac McCarthy's harrowing bestseller. Not only did it win the Best Picture Oscar but Javier Bardem did for the term "friend-o" what Jack Nicholson did for "Here's Johnny!" in 1980's The Shining.

Memento

Filmmaker Chris Nolan (The Dark Knight) rose to fame with this mindbender about a man trying to discover who murdered his wife. The problem: His memory isn't too clear so the narrative is as mysterious as his concussed mind.

Wall-E

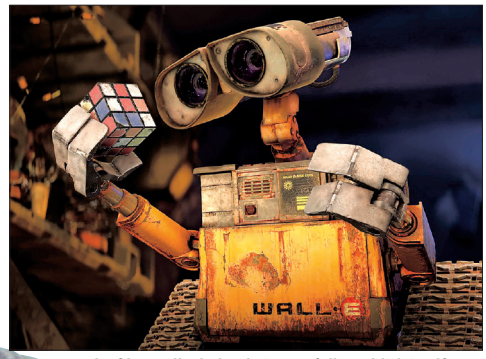
Even though it was obvious before this 2008 hit, Pixar fully established itself with Wall-E as the decade's most progressive studio providing family fare that's intelligent, challenging and entertaining for both kids and adults.

There were several other films over the past decade worth mentioning as well: Eccentric screenwriter Charlie Kaufman teamed up with director Michel Gondry for the absurdist rom-com Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind; Martin Scorsese won a long-awaited Oscar with his cop-drama The Departed and Guillermo del Toro even created one of the decade's most amazing movies with Pan's Labyrinth. And even though that fantasy flick may not have achieved the same legend at the box-office, it shows that the past decade will be perhaps best remembered for the promise of what's to come in the next ten years.

Movie feature



Lord of the Rings transformed the epic adventure genre and set the tone for similar movies throughout the decade.



The film Wall-E helped Pixar to full establish itself as a Hollywood player during the '00s.



Top 10 in '09

It's been a very good year for movies. After all, recent reports have shown that admissions are up over last year (which is necessary when blockbusters like Avatar are costing upwards of $500 million to make).

But with the past twelve months giving us everything from big-budget thrillers like Star Trek and Watchmen to edgy indie dramas like Paranormal Activity and Humpday, it's never easy to compile the best of the best. Instead, I scoured ten film critic associations' lists in order to find the best movies of 2009. As the cream rose to the top, here is what became the most popular films of 2009:

1. The Hurt Locker
2. Inglourious Basterds
3. Up
4. Up in the Air
5. Precious
6. District 9
7. A Serious Man
8. (500) Days of Summer
9. Fantastic Mr. Fox
10. The Messenger

STEVE GOW/FOR METRO CANADA

Simpsons turning public off on nuclear power?

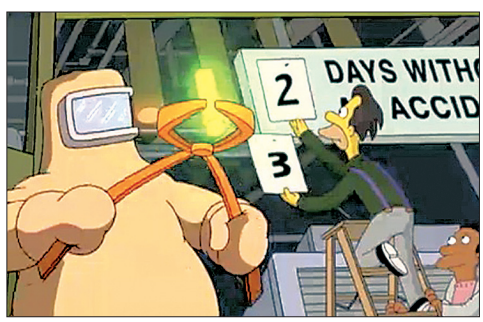
TV An American philosophy professor who has edited a series of books about how TV programs such as The Simpsons have affected popular culture says many people may be concerned about nuclear power from watching the animated cartoon show.

Dr. Bill Irwin, a philosophy professor at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., says Homer — the bumbling main character in The Simpsons who works at a nuclear power plant — has perhaps helped to put a negative spin on nuclear power by doing such things on the show as trying to stop a meltdown by randomly pressing buttons on a console. He also points out that the owner of the nuclear power plant in The Simpsons, Mr. Burns, is portrayed as a cold-hearted, greedy industrialist. But the show's most intelligent character, Homer's daughter, Lisa, is portrayed as a staunch environmental advocate.

"She's very eco-friendly and very much against nuclear power and the nuclear power plant run by Mr. Burns," Irwin said during a recent interview on a Saskatchewan radio talk show.

The editor of the book The Simpsons and Philosophy says television and movies about nuclear disasters such as Chernobyl and Three Mile Island have also added to negative publicity surrounding nuclear power.

Irwin has also edited a series of similar books, which look at the effect of such TV shows as The Sopranos. THE CANADIAN PRESS



A philosophy professor has charged that The Simpsons has shaped the way people perceive nuclear power.

Tila Tequila could be surrogate mom

Is Tila Tequila giving her brother a shot at fatherhood? In a Twitter post on Sunday, the reality-TV star wrote that she is serving as a surrogate mother for her brother and his wife. PEOPLE.COM



Stone finds freedom

British soul siren ready for bright new year

MAUREEN LITTLEJOHN
for Metro Canada

British soul sensation Joss Stone is no longer between a rock and a hard place.

Her new album, Colour Me Free, on EMI Records, (released in October) has received critical praise. She's got a European tour scheduled for February and she hopes to tour North America later in the year. All good news after 2009, when the feisty 22-year-old singer publicly tried to parachute from her record deal (to no avail) and had her album release delayed for half a year.

"Music is how I get things out. My songs are a reflection of my emotions. I write about everything, when I'm p—ed off, frustrated or in love," she explained over the phone from her home in Devon, England.

Colour Me Free was written and recorded in a week in early 2008 at her mum's live music club Mama Stone's. Warm, organic and rootsy, the 12 songs have a vintage '60s soul feel, peppered with contemporary stylings. An all-star lineup of guests includes guitarist Jeff Beck, drummer Sheila E., singer-songwriter and producer Raphael Saadiq and rapper Nas.

"It was a gorgeous day and I really wanted to make an album. My writing partners Jon (Shorten) and Conner (Reeves) thought I was crazy. The band flew in the next day. We brought in some recording equipment and made it up as we went along," said Stone.

The first two tracks, Free Me and Could Have Been You, are outstanding. "I wrote Could Have Been You when I was 15. I asked Jon and Conner to help me finish it. Most of the other songs evolved just by trying sounds out with the band. It was really fun. We didn't use any structure or formula," she said.

"My songs are a reflection of my emotions. I write about everything, when I'm p—ed off, frustrated or in love." Joss Stone

Her most challenging accomplishment in 2009 took place on the small screen. In the fall, The Tudors TV show featured Stone as German noblewoman Anne of Cleves, Henry VIII's fourth wife. Henry found Anne so repulsive he decided not to consummate the marriage.

"I like her not," he declared. Hard to believe with the glowing Stone cast in the part, but then drama is all about a willing suspension of disbelief.

Stone gamely adopted a German accent for the role, and recalled, "Anne kept her head, she lived through it. Henry gave her a castle and lots of cash. They became quite good friends. Her ugliness saved her life."

Between writing songs with her band, and doing press for her new album, Stone spent the holidays with her family in Devon. She even had them all over to her house for Christmas dinner. What did she serve? "Roasted nut loaf. I'm a vegetarian, although I'd serve turkey if anybody wanted it," she said.



Joss Stone hopes to tour North America later in the new year.

Murphy sick before death: Doctor

PEOPLE Brittany Murphy was ill with flu-like symptoms in the days before her death and prescription medications were taken from her home, the Los Angeles coroner's office said yesterday.

The 32-year-old star of films such as Clueless and 8 Mile died Sunday after collapsing at her Hollywood Hills home. Paramedics tried to revive her, but she was pronounced dead at hospital. Police said there was no evidence of foul play.

Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter said they conducted an autopsy yesterday to try to determine what killed the actress, and said her death appeared to be from natural causes, but the office will defer releasing a cause of death until after toxicology tests are complete.

Neighbour Clare Staples said she saw firefighters working to resuscitate the actress Sunday.

She said Murphy was on a stretcher.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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12/22/09 primetime	31	31	31 ABC	News Center 5	World News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Scrubs	Better Off Ted	Oprah Special
	7	7	7 ASN	The Road to Avonlea		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		*Lives of the Saints* (2005, Drama) Sophia Loren.				Atlantis
	11	11	11 CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	*A Christmas Story* ★★★★ (1983, Comedy)				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	2	2	2 CBC-F	Pyramide (SC)	Union-force	Martin sur la route (N) (SC)		Le Show du Refuge (HDTV) Le Refuge des jeunes. (N) (SC)				Le Téléjournal
	32	32	32 CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	NCIS "Silent Night"		NCIS: Los Angeles		The Good Wife
	69	69	69 CFTM	TVA nouvelles	Vidéos	Qui perd gagne (SC)		*Les Dernières Vacances* ★★ (2006, Comédie) Queen Latifah.				TVA nouvelles
	6	6	6 CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	NCIS "Silent Night"		*The Christmas Choir* (2008, Drama) Jason Gedrick.				News Final (N)
	9	9	9 CJCH	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	The Rankin Family Reunion		*Deck the Halls* (2005, Comedy-Drama), Ken Pogue (DVS)				CTV News
	10	10	10 ELTV	(6) EastLink Television				Podium TV		Community Matters		
	36	36	36 FOX	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Carrie Underwood: An All-Star Holiday Special (HDTV)				Fox First
	12	12	12 NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access H.	Extra (N)	The Biggest Loser "Where Are They Now"				Jay Leno Show
	29	29	29 NW	(6) Power & Politics		Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		fifth estate
	4	4	4 PBS-B	PBS NewsHour (N)		Greater Boston	La Plaza-Maria	Nova "Darwin's Darkest Hour" (DVS)				Frank Lloyd
	35	35	35 PBS-D	PBS NewsHour (N)		Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Freshwater Seas		Freshwater Seas		Frontline
	68	68	68 TQS	Guerre clans	Popcorn TV (N)	Touche pas à mon fils		Dirty Sexy Money (SC)		Pratique privée (N) (SC)		Guerre clans
news	23	96	96 BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call Tonight		The Close	Market Call	Squeeze Play		Business News
	18	18	18 CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		CNN Tonight (N)		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Cooper 360
sports	54	54	54 GOLF	Golf Central	Big Break		Big Break		Big Break		Big Break	
	52	52	52 RSE	Connected W-Prime Time		Olympics: Away From Home		Skiing		The Ultimate Fighter (HDTV)		Sportsnet Con.
	55	55	55 SCOR	After Wrestling	Covers Experts	Cabby Unlimit	Score Today	Court Surfing NBA news, scores and highlights.				
	45	45	45 SPD	Unique Whips		Pass Time	Pass Time	Monster Jam (HDTV)		Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Drives
	53	53	53 TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	That's Hockey!	Boxing Manny Pacquiao vs. Miguel Cotto.			Hockey		
family	43	43	43 FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
	44	44	44 TOON	Little Spirit: Christmas		*A Dennis the Menace Christmas* (2007, Comedy)				Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad
	26	26	26 TREE	Toopy & Binoo	(7:35) Annabelle's Wish	Rudolph, Red-Nosed Reindeer			Night Garden	Little Bear	Fourth King	Babar
	27	27	27 YTV	Rudolph, Red-Nosed Reindeer		Year Without a Santa Claus		*Crazy for Christmas* (2005, Drama) Andrea Roth.				Family Biz
cable variety	16	16	16 A&E	Paranormal	Paranormal	Paranormal	Paranormal	Paranormal	Paranormal	Psychic Kids: Paranormal		Paranormal
	70	70	70 APTN	APTN National News (N)		Fish Out	Mixed Blessing	Cashing In	Rabbit Fall	Blackfly	Moose TV	Rez Rides
	50	50	50 BET	(6) *ATL* ★★ (2006, Comedy-Drama)				*Coming to America* ★★★ (1988, Comedy) Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall.				Monica: Still
	37	37	37 BRVO	Wind at My Back		Christmas at the Concert Hall		Johnny Cash Christmas		Johnny Cash Live at Montreux 1994		
	25	25	25 CMT	Tara Oram's Christmas Carol		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		*The Most Wonderful Time of the Year* (2008, Drama)				Home Improve.
	49	49	49 COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	22 Minutes	The Simpsons	South Park	Corner Gas
	153	153	153 COURT	Killer Next Door		Situation Critical		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Psychic Witness		Critical
	38	38	38 DISC	Destroyed	Destroyed	Daily Planet (N)		How It's Made	How It's Made	Destroyed	Destroyed	Time Warp (N)
	34	48	48 HGTV	Extreme Makeover: Home		House Hunters	Property Virgin	HGTV's Top 10	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Genevieve	House Hunters
	46	46	46 HIST	Ultimate Engineering		Ancient Discoveries (N)		Cities of the Underworld		Cities of the Underworld		Engineering
	17	17	17 MM	Secret Life of American Teen		Gossip Girl (HDTV)		Live at Much (N)		Live at Much		Teen Choice
	19	19	19 MMM	I Want to Work for Diddy		I Want to Work for Diddy		I Want to Work for Diddy		I Want to Work for Diddy		Entourage
	201	201	201 M1	(6:15) *Killshot* (2009)		(7:55) *Twilight* ★★ (2008, Romance) Kristen Stewart.				*Leatherheads* (2008, Romance-Comedy)		
	48	23	23 OLN	Mantracker		Ghost Hunters		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
	51	51	51 PEACH	The Office	Name Is Earl	Family Guy	Family Guy	House-Payne	House-Payne	Law & Order: SVU		*Legally Bld 2*
	206	206	206 PIX	*Close Encounters-3rd Kind*		(8:10) *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (2001, Fantasy)				*Heartbreakers* ★★ (2001, Comedy)		
	67	67	67 RDI	RDI monde	RDI économie	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI économie
	39	39	39 SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	The Outer Limits		*Christmas Town* (2008, Romance-Comedy), Garry Chalk				Bones
	40	40	40 SLICE	Skin Deep	Skin Deep	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Wedding SOS	Bulging Brides
	47	47	47 SPACE	Stargate SG-1		Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Star Trek: Voyager		Medium		Supernatural
	14	14	14 SPIKE	UFC Unleashed		UFC Unleashed		Ways to Die	Ways to Die	MANswers	MANswers	Ways to Die
	57	98	98 STAR	etalk (N)	TMZ (N)	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		The View (HDTV) (N)		Dr. Oz Show
	21	21	21 TLC	Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	More Crazy Christmas Lights		Table for 12	Table for 12	18 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	Little Couple
	56	34	34 TROP	Prod. Parker	Prod. Parker	'70s Show	'70s Show	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	Switch	Family Guy
	20	20	20 TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	La Vie est un cirque		Petits meurtres en famille			Coco Chanel	
	28	28	28 V	Mysterious Ways		Murder, She Wrote		Hallelujah!	Dinnerladies	*The Man Who Saved Christmas* (2002)		
	60	97	97 VIVA	Da Vinci's Inquest		Cold Case "Revolution"		Missing "Fugitive"		The Closer "Ruby"		Cold Case
	22	22	22 W	Grocery Bag	Maxed Out	*Stolen Miracle* (2001, Drama) Leslie Hope, Hugh Thompson.				*Home by Christmas* (2006, Drama)		
	251	251	251 WGN	WGN Evening News		Two/Half Men	Family Guy	90210 (HDTV)		Melrose Place "Pilot"		WGN News

critics' corner

A Christmas Story
Peter Billingsley stars as the little boy who yearns to find a Red Ryder BB gun under the Christmas tree. Not just a Christmas story, it's about parents, little brothers, bullies, secret decoder rings, double dog dares and most of all, the inner workings of a youthful mind. Jean Shepherd's writing captures it all perfectly. Darren McGavin also stars in the 1983 comedy. 8 PM on CBC



Johnny Cash Live at Montreux 1994
One of Europe's most prestigious music festivals is the setting for this concert special featuring the legendary "Man in Black." Cash performs such signature hits as "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Ring of Fire" and teams up with his wife, June Carter Cash, for a few numbers. Their son, John, also makes an appearance. 10 PM on BRVO

The Man Who Saved Christmas
This 2002 docudrama is based on the true story of inventor and toymaker A.C. Gilbert, played by Jason Alexander. When World War I breaks out, the government asks Gilbert to produce munitions instead of toys — and he agrees. But when he's asked to urge Americans to buy bonds instead of Christmas toys, Gilbert sets out to convince Congress of the value of holiday cheer. 10 PM on V



Fatone awaits second child

'N Sync star Joey Fatone looks set to become a father again in 2010. The pop star-turned-TV presenter's wife Kelly Baldwin is due to give birth to the couple's second child in January, usmagazine.com reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Zeta-Jones flashes Broadway auditorium

PEEKABOO Some Broadway theatergoers got a little more bang for their buck at a recent performance of A Little Night Music when Catherine Zeta-Jones inadvertently flashed a section of the auditorium, according to Page Six.

"I couldn't believe it. No wonder Michael Douglas looks so happy," an audience member says. "The couple sitting next to me also saw it and poked each other." METRO WORLD NEWS



Britney Spears posts fiction alerts on website: Report

DO YOU REALLY CARE ANYWAY? Having trouble sorting fact from fiction when it comes to Britney Spears? Allow Britney herself to help you out, people.com reports.

The pop star has introduced a new "Bulls—t Alerts" page on her website, meant to deliver "the inside scoop straight from Britney and her team on what's true and what's bull."

The page launches by focusing on the bull, and lots of it. A post titled "The Year in BS" presents a list of the 75 most outlandish media stories reported about Britney over the past year, as determined by the Spears team.

"There were more then 13,000 stories written about Britney in 2009," says the post. "We ranked the ones we believe were the most ridiculous. Either because they were factually inaccurate, because they reported the patently absurd, or because we believe they are simply offensive to the sensibilities."

The No. 1 story on the list, from the Mirror in the U.K., claimed that Britney was dating Indian choreographer Sandip Soparrkar.

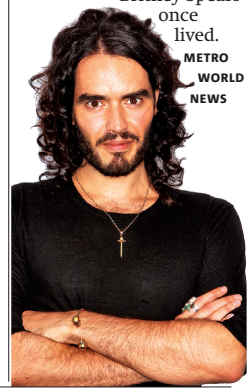
Also in the top 10: reports that Spears, 28, wasn't prepared for her world tour, that she thought her father was drugging her, that she was dating music producer Dallas Austin, and that she filmed a music video topless. METRO NEWS SERVICES



Brand, Perry purchase Brit's old estate

HOLLYWOOD LIVING Things seem to be going swingingly for Russell Brand and Katy Perry, as the British comedian has reportedly purchased a home to share with Perry, according to Hollyscoop.

The property in question is a $3.5 million US, seven-bedroom mansion in The Summit estate in Los Angeles, the same gated community where Britney Spears once lived. METRO WORLD NEWS



Celebrity tweets

Neil Patrick Harris suffers from the snow like everyone else, Lindsay Lohan tries to clear things up after getting hacked and Ashton Kutcher pays his respects to Brittany Murphy.

• @ActuallyNPH Holiday Airline Madness! Flight to NY cancelled, mad dash to find seats in full planes. Feel like I'm on the Amazing Race. In the bad way.

• @lindsaylohan I never twittered anything about rihanna, I actually just had to email someone to reset my password. Waste of paper to all you tabloids :)

• @aplusk 2day the world lost a little piece of sunshine. My deepest condolences go out 2 Brittany's family, her husband, & her amazing mother Sharon. see you on the other side kid. METRO WORLD NEWS



Winehouse causes stir during Christmastime pantomime

NO STAGE FRIGHT Amy Winehouse shocked theatre-goers by hurling abuse at the cast and reportedly kicking the theatre's manager, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The troubled star is being investigated by British police after her antics at the pantomime — a traditional musical comedy production, typically performed around Christmas — which saw her disrupt the performance of Cinderella by heckling its stars before attacking front-of-house manager Richard Pound.

Winehouse — who is thought to have been drinking — reportedly spent more than half an hour of the first act of the performance yelling expletives. METRO WORLD NEWS



Miller invites Law over for the holidays

HEY JUDE, TAKE MY CHRISTMAS AND MAKE IT BETTER Sienna Miller has invited Jude Law to spend Christmas with her, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress — who has reportedly rekindled her relationship with the Sherlock Holmes star — has now asked him to join her at a secluded beachfront villa in Barbados where she will be spending the festive break with friends.

A source told The Sun newspaper: "She is jetting to the Caribbean (today) and has asked Jude if he would like to join her.

"He's very much considering the proposal and would love to take up the opportunity but has a number of other considerations — not least his kids."

Jude, 36 — who has four children, including a two-month-old daughter Sophia from a brief fling with model Samantha Burke — first dated Sienna in 2004, but they split two years later when he was caught having an affair with a nanny. METRO WORLD NEWS

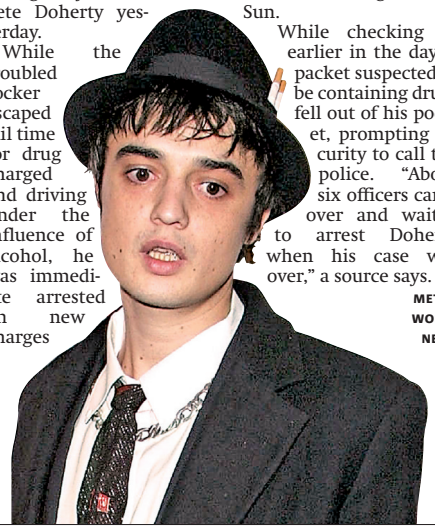


Doherty busted upon leaving courtroom

DRUGS IN HIS POCKET It was a rough day in court for Pete Doherty yesterday.

While the troubled rocker escaped jail time for drug charged and driving under the influence of alcohol, he was immediate arrested on new charges while leaving the courthouse, according to the Sun.

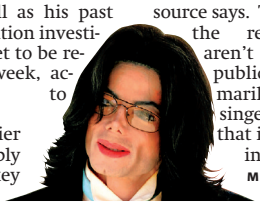
While checking in earlier in the day, a packet suspected to be containing drugs fell out of his pocket, prompting security to call the police. "About six officers came over and waited to arrest Doherty when his case was over," a source says. METRO WORLD NEWS



Jacko file slated for release

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS More than 300 pages of a 679-page FBI file detailing Michael Jackson's recent death as well as his past child molestation investigations are set to be released this week, according to Hollyscoop.

"This dossier is an incredibly important key to understanding what happened behind closed doors, and may help the world better understand Michael," a source says. The pages of the report that aren't being made public deal primarily with the singer's death, as that is still under investigation. METRO WORLD NEWS



Nicole Scherzinger, British racer on the rocks, new report claims

ON A BRAKE Nicole Scherzinger's romance with racing driver Lewis Hamilton is reportedly on the rocks, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Pussycat Dolls singer has been dating the British Formula One ace for nearly three years, but they have reportedly not seen each other in three weeks and shelved plans to spend Christmas together.

A source told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "Lewis and Nicole have had a few problems for a while now. They love each other dearly but have incredibly busy schedules.

"Nicole was in London last week and was desperate to hook up with Lewis but she was busy in the studio while he is on a European training camp and couldn't come back."

A spokesperson for Hamilton insisted the couple is "perfectly fine." METRO WORLD NEWS



The Weather Network ©The Weather Network 2009

Today Flurries 40% -10° / -11°

Wednesday Flurries 40% -3° / -6°

Thursday Variable -1° / -7°

TAKE THE WEATHER WITH YOU visit mobile.theweathernetwork.com

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: metronews.ca/food

Take Five

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12				■	13				■	14		
15				16					■	17		
■	■	■	18				■	19	20			
21	22	23			■	■	24				■	■
25				■	26	27					28	29
30			■	31					■	32		
33			34					■	35			
■	■	36				■	■	37				
38	39				■	40	41			■	■	■
42			■	43	44					45	46	47
48			■	49				■	50			
51			■	52				■	53			

ACROSS

1 Muslim pilgrimage
5 Omit
9 Omega preceder
12 Jai —
13 Golden Rule word
14 Rowing need
15 Cheating
17 "Birth — Nation"
18 Bird house?
19 Page or Pompeo
21 Smartens (up)
24 Book after Joel
25 Pale
26 Starving
30 Modernday evidence
31 Legerdemain
32 Gorilla
33 Jogged untogged?
35 Manitoba tribe
36 Swiss artist Paul
37 Creator
38 Bigfoot's family?
40 Part mine, part yours
42 Eggs
43 One-piece swimwear
48 Lair
49 Wedding shower?
50 Liniment target
51 Deluge refuge
52 Raw minerals
53 City on the Rhone

DOWN

1 Possessed
2 Foreman foe
3 Pickle holder
4 Unlicensed taxi
5 Dines
6 Entanglement
7 Judge Lance
8 Attack on one's opinions
9 Sly one with a cue
10 Secure
11 Persia, now
16 "Of course"
20 Part of UCLA
21 Bankrolls
22 "— It Romantic?"
23 Reality show for budding entrepreneurs
24 In the thick of
26 Charlatan
27 Census statistic
28 Duel tool
29 Antelope's playmate
31 Orchestra leader
34 Inventor Whitney
35 Informal
37 "— Miniver"
38 "Star Wars" sage
39 Always
40 Formerly
41 Banjos' kin
44 Melody
45 Unfriendly
46 However, in poetry
47 D.C. VIP

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

4		3				1		8
	9		1		8		5	
7			5		9			2
		8	3		5	4		
		9	6		4	3		
8			2		7			6
	1		4		6		3	
5		7				8		4

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

E	Z	I	O	■	M	E	A	■	G	E	E	K
G	O	L	D	B	E	R	G	■	L	I	R	A
G	O	L	D	M	I	N	E	■	I	R	O	N
■	■	■	J	O	N	■	L	A	T	E	S	T
A	D	H	O	C	■	D	I	S	C	■	■	■
B	O	O	B	■	M	E	M	P	H	I	S	■
E	L	L	■	L	E	W	I	S	■	D	O	C
■	T	Y	P	E	S	E	T	■	H	E	R	O
■	■	■	A	S	H	Y	■	M	E	A	T	Y
I	N	S	I	T	U	■	A	A	A	■	■	■
R	O	O	D	■	G	O	L	D	R	U	S	H
K	U	D	U	■	G	O	L	D	S	T	A	R
S	N	A	P	■	E	P	S	■	T	E	D	S

7	4	3	1	6	5	8	2	9
1	2	6	9	8	4	7	5	3
9	5	8	7	2	3	4	6	1
3	8	9	6	4	2	1	7	5
5	1	4	8	3	7	2	9	6
6	7	2	5	9	1	3	4	8
8	3	5	4	7	6	9	1	2
2	6	7	3	1	9	5	8	4
4	9	1	2	5	8	6	3	7

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day



Venison with Chunky Vegetable Braise

INGREDIENTS:

2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
3 shallots, roughly chopped
1 lb (500 g) butternut squash, peeled and diced
2 celery sticks, sliced
1 bay leaf
1 1/4 cup (300 ml) beef stock
2 tbsp (25 ml) Worcestershire sauce
4 venison steaks
398 mL can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 tsp (5 ml) smoked or regular paprika

METHOD:

1. Heat oil in a large, heavy-based pot and fry shallots, squash and celery over fairly high heat, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown. Preheat broiler to high.
2. Add bay leaf, stock and 1 tbsp (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce, and bring to boil. Reduce heat, then cover and simmer until vegetables are just tender. Adjust seasoning if necessary.
3. Meanwhile, brush venison steaks with remaining Worcestershire sauce and cook 4-5 minutes on each side. Cut into thick pieces, if you like.
4. Stir chickpeas into pot of vegetables and bring back to boil. Spoon vegetables onto serving plates and top with venison. Sprinkle with the paprika and serve. **SERVES 4**

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out **Key Ingredients** in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!



Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
This is the ideal time to make an impression on people in positions of power. If you are hoping for a promotion the Sun will help you be noticed.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You can work alone if you wish but the planets indicate you need to join forces with like-minded people if you want to see your dream become a reality.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Try not to be too concerned about what you own and earn because that could lead to conflict with someone whose needs may be at odds with your own.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
If you are serious about your aims and ambitions it would be wise to consult partners and colleagues before you do anything about them.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Cosmic activity in the area of your chart that governs your daily routine will pile on the pressure over the next few days.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Because the Sun is transiting the most dynamic area of your chart you must aim higher than ever before.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You will have to deal with people today who, to say the least, are emotionally difficult and there may be times when you could scream at them to stop.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Words will come easy to you today and you will leave no one in any doubt what it is you mean and what it is you expect of them.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Don't worry too much if your financial and business affairs are in a bit of a mess because the Sun's transit of the money area of your chart will help.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
If you want to start something new or if you want to change your life in some way now is the time to stop thinking about it and to start acting.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
This is generally a happy time of year for you but it could be one of the happiest ever if you face up to a fear that has been a constant in your life.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Make the effort to get out and about and meet new and exciting people. You are an introvert but you should be be more adventurous.

This day in history

1944: World War II: Battle of the Bulge – German troops demand the surrender of United States troops at Bastogne, Belgium, prompting the famous one word reply by General Anthony McAuliffe: "Nuts!"
1944: World War II: The Vietnam People's Army is formed to resist Japanese occupation of Indo-China, now Vietnam.
1965: In the United Kingdom, a 70mph speed limit is applied to all rural roads including motorways for the first time. Previously, there had been no speed limit.
1989: Berlin's Brandenburg Gate re-opens after nearly 30 years, effectively ending the division of East and West Germany.

TAKE A BREAK FROM WORK

Visit metronews.ca to watch metrotube of the day

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AIR CANADA VACATIONS



Holiday deals

starting at $569

+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $153

Las Vegas via Toronto
Monte Carlo Resort & Casino • 4★
Hotel rm.
Jan. 24 • 4 nts.
$569
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $153

Jamaica
Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa • 4★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Feb. 8 • 1 wk.
$1189
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $266

Punta Cana
Gran Bahia Principe Punta Cana • 5★
All-Inclusive • Junior suite
Mar. 6 • 1 wk.
$1439
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $297

Cayo Coco / Cayo Guillermo
NH Krystal Laguna Villas & Resort • 4★
All-Inclusive • Club laguna rm.
Feb. 13 & Mar. 6 • 1 wk.
$899
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $213

Iberostar Rose Hall Beach • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive
Standard garden view rm.
Feb. 8, 15, & 22 • 1 wk.
$1599
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $266

Los Cabos via Toronto
Barceló Los Cabos Palace Deluxe • 5★
All-Inclusive • Junior suite
Jan. 9–30 • 1 wk.
$1349
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $287

Varadero
Sirenis La Salina Varadero • 4★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Mar. 5 & 19 • 1 wk.
$1139
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $213

Puerto Plata
Bahia Principe San Juan • 4★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Feb. 17 • 1 wk.
$1319
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $297

Turks & Caicos via Ottawa
The Sands at Grace Bay • 4★
Studio courtyard
Jan. 11 & 18 • 1 wk.
$1349
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $233

DEAL to EUROPE

Paris via Toronto or Montreal
Hotel Cervantes Paris • 3★
Breakfast
Standard double rm.
Jan. 21, 22, 28 & 29 • 3 nts.
$637
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $409

DEAL on CRUISES

Royal Caribbean International[1]
Adventure of the Seas®
Southern Caribbean cruise
Flights to San Juan via Montreal
Interior stateroom cat. L
Jan 17 • 1 wk.
$1419
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $251

PALACE RESORTS

Punta Cana
Moon Palace Casino, Golf & Spa Resort • 5★
All-Inclusive • Caribbean suite
Mar. 6 • 1 wk.
$1899
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $297

Cancun / Riviera Maya
Moon Palace Golf & Spa Resort • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive • Superior deluxe garden view rm.
Mar. 28 • 1 wk.
$1949
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $276


Moon Palace Casino Golf & Spa Resort

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